

**CONSECRATION TO MARY:
A HISTORIC-SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARIAN
CONSECRATION IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE
COVENANT OF LOVE**

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By

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I thank you for everything Mother
I give you heartfelt thanks
Bind me to you Mother with tender love.
What would have become of me without you
And without your motherly care!
Because you delivered me from great needs
And bound me to yourself in faithful love
I will give you thanks,
Be grateful forevermore
And dedicate myself to you
With undivided love – Amen. (Heavenwards)

In gratitude to the
Mother, Queen and Victress of Schönstatt
And to the
Community of Schönstatt Fathers (ISch)

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I. General Introduction

The greatest ongoing Love-story being enacted on the stage of this world is the Love-story between God and human beings. God is love and He has never stopped to communicate His love to mankind until today. He created human beings in His own image and likeness and gave them a heart to love Him in a complete state of freedom. This is the reason to say that “*we are born to love and our vocation is to love God*”. This unique ‘divine-human’ relationship of love has been nourished by God, by entering into covenantal relationships with human beings. This would mean that human beings were given the privileged position to be partners with God. The spiritual centre and the spiritual axis of the International Apostolic Schönstatt Movement is the sealing of Covenant with Mary as a “Covenant of Love” by an Act of Consecration in the Shrine, through which one becomes partner of Mary. Through the Covenant of Love, one places everything, which constitutes one’s human and Christian life at the disposal of Mary and becomes partner with her to carry out her mission in this world. This sealing of the Covenant with Mary in Schönstatt is fundamentally based on the biblical model of God’s Covenant with Human beings. This thesis is an attempt to manifest the multiple dimensions of the uniqueness and the originality of the Covenant of Love with Mary in Schönstatt.

I.1. The Context and the theme of the Research

I grew up in my family in India, which was basically Marian in its nature. The practice of Marian devotions, especially the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, regular visits to the Marian pilgrim shrines belonged to the normal life of my family members. I was always amazed to a great extent to see the crowds of people pouring into the Marian pilgrim shrines and their expressions of devotion to Mary through offerings and intense prayers. One can never become tired of listening to the miracles stories performed by Mary at these Shrines. But there was not a single moment in my life, where I questioned myself: “How does Mary work all these changes and miracles in the life of the pilgrims and Marian devotees? My simple belief was: “*Everything changes for better where Mary helps*”. I continued to live my Marian spirituality with this simple belief.

It was indeed a great joy for me to join the Secular Institute of the Schönstatt Fathers in the year 1987, which has a strong Marian spirituality. I was totally

influenced by Marian spirituality both at home and in the Seminaries. As a young novice on January 18, 1996, I made a Covenant of Love with Mary in Schönstatt. This brought remarkable changes in my personal life and in my relationship with Mary. I was happy with the new life that I was experiencing because of my Marian consecration and I never took any initiative to find out the reasons for the changes in my life and how it came about. My simple belief: “*Everything changes for better where Mary helps*” continued to grow stronger and deeper.

As a newly ordained Priest I worked as a chaplain at the Marian pilgrim Shrine, St. Mary’s Basilica, Bangalore, India. Outside of this gothic Church building, there is an attractive Marian shrine with a beautiful statue of Mother Mary holding Child Jesus in her arms, 6 feet in height. The uniqueness of the Marian devotion is that the devotees offer Mary ‘Sarees’ the typical dress of the Indian Lady as a gift of thanksgiving for their fulfilled prayer requests. Mary is draped in the ‘Sarees’ offered by the pilgrims. The highlight of this shrine is the celebration of the Feast day of the Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary, on September 8th every year, in a grand and spectacular manner. In preparation to the Feast, nine days novena is observed. During the novena days and on the Feast day millions of people visit to pay homage to Mary. What caught my attention was that half of the pilgrims who came there were Muslims and Hindus. For the first time I raised the question: How could Mary draw so many hearts to her Shrine from all over the places? How does she work actively in the life of the faithful, who entrust themselves to her? For some unexplainable reason, she was having a great effect on the life of one who has made an act of Consecration to her. It was indeed frustrating, to find the gems of “Mary’s active role in an act of Consecration” in the huge mountain of Church’s tradition. I tried to discover this gem from the available Mariology knowledge that I had from my theology studies and I tried to discover my answers in my Marian spirituality but I chalked it up to something else which lead me nowhere. The question about Mary’s active role in an Act of Consecration remained as a thorn in my flesh until I got the chance to do my doctoral studies.

In fact it took me several months of thinking and discussions with many fathers in my community about finding a better way to explore the concept of Mary’s active role in an Act of Consecration. In one of my discussions with Dr. Peter Wolf it struck me in a blinding flash of the obvious “Covenant of Love spirituality” which

royally highlights, Mary's active role in an act of Consecration and this helped me to frame my theme in a concrete manner. It became very clear to me that the historical practice of "Marian consecration" in the tradition of the Church and in various religious movements, especially in the Marian Congregations points out to the truth, that the fundamental character of this entrustment of the faithful to Mary through the Act of Consecration remained always *unilateral*. This means that in the practice of entrustment to Mary only the active participation of the faithful was always highlighted but the role of Mary in the Act of Consecration was completely sidelined. This was the general basic attitude in a Marian consecration in the tradition of the Church. But in Schönstatt, the Act of Consecration is *mutual*. The spirituality of Covenant of Love explains in clear manner how Mary plays an active role in an Act of Consecration and it explains her mediatory role in a practical manner. This *mutual* dimension of the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt seems to me as a new development in the historical practice of Marian consecration in the Church. This motivated me to work on the originality of the *mutual* dimension of the Covenant of Love by analysing its uniqueness with the *unilateral* dimension of the Marian consecration in the tradition of the Church.

I.2. Aim of the Research

The apparition places of the Mother of Jesus to visionaries have in course of time turned into shrines or spiritual centres of Marian devotion. The messages of Mary through her apparitions paved way to the emergence of various Marian movements, which reflected new Marian spiritual developments and renewals in the life of the church. The dynamic process of such new Marian spiritualities exercised great influence on the faith of the Christians in the history of the Church. One of the Marian spiritualities, which have a greater significance both for the Church and for the world, is the spirituality of consecration to Mary. In the practice of this spirituality the accent is often laid on the person who consecrates himself/herself to Mary. The devotee is invited to bring his/her contributions to Mary in the form of offering or sacrifice as a sign of his/her devotion so that Mary may gain the requested graces or the requested protection. Mary's role in fulfilling the requested graces and in helping the one who consecrates to give up the life of sin and selfishness and to grow in holiness is not explicitly manifested in living out this spirituality. The international Schönstatt Movement is a Marian movement, which did not come into

existence through any Marian apparitions. The founder of the Schönstatt movement, Fr. Joseph Kentenich, together with the founding generation of boys through an Act of Consecration on October 18, 1914, invited Mary to come and dwell in the simple old Chapel in Schönstatt as their Mother and Educator. They placed themselves entirely at the disposal of Mary as her instruments and assured their co-operation with her in making the small old Chapel into a place of grace. This Act of Consecration was later termed by Fr. Kentenich as the Covenant of Love. The spirituality of Covenant of Love is decidedly marked by a practical, mutual and active co-operation of the covenant partners-Mary and us. Through that Covenant in which the mutual responsibilities of the covenant partners are very important, the Blessed Mother is petitioned to work especially in Schönstatt as Mother and Educator of Christians, that she leads them to a profound and vital love for God and human beings. The Marian Consecration in Schönstatt namely the Covenant of Love is marked by the “mutual” Character which is different from the “unilateral” character of the Marian Consecration in the Church’s tradition. The mutual character, which marks the unique nature of this spirituality, is solidly founded on the doctrine of Grace and on the Theology of Covenant. This dissertation aims at portraying the originality and the uniqueness of the structural Foundations of the Covenant of love, which is mutual in character that ultimately lies in the profound, active and vital role of Mary as mother and educator of Christian personality along with its theological and dogmatic grounds. Through this I want to highlight the development from unilateral to the mutual character of Marian Consecration in the spirituality of Schönstatt.

I.3. The Structure of the Thesis

This research consists of five chapters. Before I proceed to present a detailed outline of my thesis a few remarks have to be made. I began my work by interviewing some of the Rectors of the Marian pilgrim shrines and also the priests in Hindu temples and in the Mosque to gain the knowledge on consecration. These interviews contributed a lot to go into the depths of the concept of Marian consecration and to understand the concept of consecration in Hinduism and in Islam. The interview was conducted at the following places: St. Mary’s Forane

Church (built in 105 AD) in Kuravilangad in the Kottayam district in Kerala¹, India; Our Lady of Dolours Basilica (established in 1814) in Thirussur city in Kerala, India; St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Catholic Forane Church, generally known as Korattymuthy's Shrine (established in 1381) in Koratty in the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly in Kerala, India²; St. Mary's Church (founded in 900 AD) in Nakapuzha in the district of Ernakulam in Kerala, India; Our Lady of Vailankanni Church (established in 1973), in Besant Nagar, in the Archdiocese of Madras Mylapore in Tamilnadu, India; Vadipatti Matha Kovil (established in 2000) in Madurai in Tamilnadu, India; Meenakshi Amman Temple Built (between 1623 and 1655) a historic Hindu temple, in Madurai in Tamilnadu, India; Sri Kurunchi kumaran Temple (established in 2008) in Gummersbach, Köln, Germany; A Mosque in Westmasi street in Madurai, in Tamilnadu, India.

We are living today in an era of global net culture where we are bombarded with a multiplicity of information and teachings on the meaning of life, world and God. These information and teachings have broken barriers and enabled the human beings on this globe to live with new sense of human consciousness. Unfortunately today the spiritual consciousness of human beings is radically being replaced through scientific knowledge and theories. But interestingly the religious consciousness since the cave man to the modern man in spite of all the achievements and developments makes him to feel that he is a weak creature and there exists the unlimited power of God. Human beings, since their existence, gave expressions to their quest to be united with the mighty God through religious practices and beliefs. Through the religious expressions man tried to weave a net of love between him and God. It was usually structured on the following pattern: "I do something for you or I bring something to you as my offering or sacrifice so that you bless me with the requested grace". But one of the strongest religious expressions of man found in the World Religions is the gift of self to the love and service of God, which is known as consecration. The first chapter deals about the concept and the significance of this religious expression - consecration in World Religions. The meaning, fundamental structure, essence of consecration and its significance in the World Religion is profoundly analyzed. Generally, every consecration is directed to God but the unique

¹ A brief mention of my interview is presented in Chapter 3.

² I was very much taken up by the various expressions of the traditional practice of Marian consecration in this shrine.

significance of consecration in Christianity is that there are also consecrations which are addressed to heavenly human beings, namely, to the saints in heaven and among these consecrations the most significant one is the consecration to the Mother of God and to her Immaculate Heart. This chapter ends on this note. This summary of consecration in World Religion was one of the most difficult researches which I made in this endeavor.

The early Church very soon understood the preciousness and the importance of the unique gift of Mary because of her privileges, which emanate from her inseparable attachment with her divine Son's life and mission. The faithful believed that the entrustment of human race to Mary on Golgotha is directed to Christ and she would lead them to the "incomprehensible riches of Christ" through her privileges. This led to the pious practice of invoking Mary's help and intercession in the Church from its early times. It is the strenuous belief of the Church that once we confide everything to her, Mary intercedes for us and disposes us for our consecration so that one may inseparably belong to Christ in love. This is what the Church propagates in the practice of Marian consecration. This gave birth to various diverse forms of consecration movements in the Church right from the early times, both in the East and in the West. Indeed it remains until today a very sentimental piety among the faithful. The second chapter is an exploration of the historic development of Marian consecration from the time of the early Church until today. The first part of the chapter deals with the historic development of the devotion towards Mary. This Journey of the Church with Mary down through the centuries serves as a stage setting to understand the background of the times in which the Marian consecration movements emerged and influenced the life of the Church, when the Christians were going through suffocating experiences in their life of faith. The second part is a detailed analysis of the birth, growth and development of the devotion of the Marian consecration in the Church. The writings and teachings of the Fathers especially the popes of the church, the teachings of the saints and the founders of various Marian movements are paramount contributions for the growth of this devotional practice. The practice of Marian consecration takes a new turn since Seventeenth century due to the teachings of the St. Grignion De Montfort and hence his teachings have been given a significant place in this chapter. Of course one cannot speak about Marian consecration without making a strong reference to the Apparitions at Fatima. The messages of Mary during the apparition at Fatima influenced the life of the Church in

a significant manner, which ultimately led to the consecration of the whole world. The role played by Sr. Lucia in consecrating the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the Popes is explicitly dealt. The chapter concludes with the consecration prayers of the Popes in the twenty first century.

Art, Liturgical worship, ecclesial teachings, magisterial pronouncements remain as a great source of inspiration in significantly promoting the devotion of Marian consecration but in spite of that this devotional practice was not free from objections and criticisms. Exaggerated veneration to Mary, wrong emphasis of the devotional practice, desacralization trends, false interpretations about the meaning of the term ‘consecration’ in relation to Marian consecration, theological errors and many other factors raised lot of problems, confusions and divisions concerning the devotional practice of Marian consecration. And hence the third chapter is an attempt to unearth and examine some of the basic problems and objections concerning Marian consecration. It aims at clarifying the wrong understanding of this devotion by presenting the fundamental concepts, the anthropological and theological foundations of Marian consecration. The fundamental concepts involved in Marian consecration are presented systematically at the very beginning of the chapter and this serves as a platform to clarify the objections and problems involved in this devotion. One of the important elements of this chapter is the clarification of the terminologies: ‘consecration and entrustment’ based on the teaching and theology of Pope John Paul II. The magisterial teachings towards the end of the chapter, with its solid scriptural roots serve as proof texts, which demonstrate more clearly how Marian consecration can be understood in a right manner.

The symbol of heart plays a vital role in Marian devotion. Heart refers not only to the internal organ in human beings, it is also considered equivalent to the person. The *Immaculate* Heart of Mary symbolizes her extraordinary sanctity and love for God and for people and thus it became a model for the way we should love God. Having understood the love which the Immaculate Heart of Mary has in store for all her children, the faithful responded to this love by developing a devotion of consecration to her Immaculate Heart. The legitimacy of this devotion was questioned by asking: How can one make an Act of Consecration to the Heart of a creature and what is theological background for such devotion? Mary indeed plays a vital role in our consecrations by winning for us the necessary graces and favours

through her mediation. This is possible because she is privileged with the position of Coredemptrix. Without the principle of mediation the devotion of consecration would be meaningless and cannot be understood. Therefore the fourth chapter is an attempt to portray thoroughly the devotion to the Immaculate Heart and the principle of mediation with the support of the rich scriptural and dogmatic insights. The fourth chapter consists of two parts. The first part deals with the history, nature, purpose and object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in relation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is strongly supported by the doctrine of Mary's queenship. The line of thought of the second part is to present in detail the determining role of Mary in our consecration based on the principle of mediation. The principle of mediation is explained in the light of Christ's unique mediation. Her role in our consecration cannot be understood without understanding her role as Coredemptrix in the economy of salvation. Therefore Mary's mediation as Coredemptrix is explained in detail with the support of biblical view, Church's Tradition and magisterial pronouncements. A special accent is placed on the joint role of Holy Spirit and Mary in our consecrations, which makes her the "all-powerful suppliant".

Since the time of creation of the world, God related with human beings through many forms of covenants making explicit requirements and promises of blessings to them. Through the covenantal relationships God defined the purpose and destiny of human beings and filled their life with His abundance gifts of love. The highest form of God's love is expressed in giving His only begotten Son to the human race as His greatest gift for the salvation of the entire world (cf. Jn 3:16-17). His only Son, Jesus Christ, entrusted His privileged mother, Mary, to the human race from the Cross and entrusted the entire human race to her as a His' precious gifts to the human race (cf. Jn 19: 25-27). This entrustment of Mary to human race and human race to Mary is a new covenant, which God made with the entire human race through Mary. The bold attempt made by Fr. Joseph Kentenich was to enter into a covenantal relationship with Mary by sealing a Covenant of Love with Mary on October 18, 1914 in an insignificant small chapel with a group of boys. The covenant which Joseph Kentenich sealed appeared totally insignificant in the beginning but in course of time it gave birth to new life streams, which flowed beyond the borders of Germany establishing a worldwide Marian-family, known as the Schönstatt Movement. The consecration to Our Lady, the Mother Thrice Admirable in Schönstatt is called the *Covenant of Love*. It is a mutual promise and

exchange of hearts between us, the earthly partners and the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schönstatt. This mutual character in an Act of Consecration to Mary is something unique in the tradition of the Church and the final chapter is a systematic presentation of the originality and the uniqueness of the mutual character of the Covenant of Love in all its dimensions. The mutual character in the Act of Consecration is a great contribution of Fr. Kentenich to the tradition of Marian consecration in the Church. By reading this chapter we can very well understand that Fr. Kentenich did not develop something completely new in the Church rather he developed the spirituality of Covenant of Love using different elements of Marian spirituality found in the tradition of the Church and laid its foundation explicitly in the Scriptures, Tradition and magisterial teachings.

I.4. Methodological Remarks

As the title indicates, this treatise of mine is primarily historical and dogmatic in nature substantiated with theology and doctrinal contributions. The themes dealt in the individual chapters will be fundamentally expository, synthetic, comparative and analytical with a strong accent on Marian Spirituality. The Marian line of thoughts in the first four chapters is based on the Marian thought pattern of René Laurentin, Arthur Burton Calkins and Mark Miravalle. For my final chapter, I used a lot of Fr. Kentenich texts, which were already translated by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus. Gender issue is a very sensitive issue today. Unfortunately the language English does not have gender-neutral (epicene) pronouns for people. It has got only masculine and feminine ones (he, him, his or she, her,). Therefore the usage of the masculine language at some parts of my thesis was unavoidable.

II. The Concept and Significance of Consecration in World Religions

II.1. Introduction

Behind our everyday reality there are certain moments of breakthrough in life, like the birth of a child or the death of a beloved or the sufferings in the world which make us to pause and go beyond the realm of senses in search of this ultimate reality. Although Man is indeed a rational animal, he also possesses emotions and sensibilities, which at times get disturbed. There are moments in man's life where he feels uprooted, suffocated and lost in his own life situations. As soon as he starts to reflect upon his condition, man begins to sense that his connection with God is the only thing that can save him from his existential anguish. Religion serves to establish a sensitive link with God. This is indicated by the etymology of the word "religion". The Latin *religare* means 'to tie', 'to bind'. Religion begins with our experience of ultimate mystery. It begins with an awareness of a spiritual reality that envelops us and which seems to be greater than our minds can comprehend.

II.2. Religion: The Quest of Human being to enter into Covenant with God

The Catechism of the Council of Trent says:

*"The worship of God and the practice of religion, which it comprises, have the natural law for their basis: the unbidden impulse of nature prompts us to give some time to the worship of God; and this is a truth demonstrated by the unanimous consent of all nations who, accordingly, consecrated festivals to the public solemnities of religion. As nature requires some time to be given to necessary relaxation, to sleep, and to the repose and refreshment of the body; so she also requires, that some time be devoted to the mind, to refresh and invigorate its energies by heavenly contemplation. Hence the necessity of consecrating some time to the worship of the Deity and to the practice of religion, duties which, doubtless, form part of the moral law."*³

Religion is a social bond between man and the superior powers upon whom he feels his own existence to depend. Man has three means of coming into

³ Pius V, *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, (translated into English by J. Donovan), Printed for the translator by W. Folds, 1829, P. 375.

association with his gods - interest, law, and love. Therefore the religious sentiment of man manifests itself as the religion of interest, the religion of law, the religion of love, or rather an indefinite number of mixtures of these three types. The uncivilized man, in the beginning felt that he was surrounded and dominated by mysterious powers, spirits, or demons, which caused a high degree of fear in him. To protect himself against their ill-will he tried to win them as auxiliaries using formulas of magic, incantation and offering gifts under the forms of sacrifice. This religious relation in the beginning stage remains only as a relation of interest or selfishness between two unequal powers.⁴ God remains always as the ideal of human being and hence the will of a righteous God must itself be the law of righteousness. In order to establish a favourable and a blessed harmony between God and man, man has to do nothing but to lift up to God his pure hands and to fulfil God's law, namely His will. Thus morality enters into religion and transforms the religious relation. The strong God now becomes the holy God and the retaliator of violated law.

In the religions of nature man trembled before the felt disproportion of strength between the divine beings and himself. But in this religious relation he trembles for another reason too. By his violation of the law of righteousness he feels the shudders of remorse, the terror of that condemnation which awaits him at the tribunal of the judge who cannot be deceived. It's indeed a painful and humiliating experience for man to experience that he has done wrong instead of doing the right thing which in turn makes him to feel how heavy and invincible are the chains which weigh him down. This is what the Christian consciousness calls the sense of sin. This religious consciousness enables man to experience the double sentiment of his weakness and the unlimited power of God. He slowly starts experiencing the sense of the nothingness of his being and the infinite distance, which separates him from the unknown God. He begins to understand the metaphysical abyss between the finite and the infinite, between weakness and strength, the ephemeral and the eternal, the insignificant creature and the universal and perfect being. At this stage, moral conceptions like law, liberty, effort of the will in man, his strivings towards holiness, righteousness, reward or punishment by God begin to emerge in his understanding about his relationship with God. Sooner or later man comes to the conclusion that the

⁴ Cf., Sabatier, Auguste/Houghton, Louise Seymor, *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, Kessinger Publishing, 2003, Pp. 369-370.

religion of law alone cannot establish his union with the principle of his own being, and realise his harmony both with God and the world.⁵

Man wanted to escape from this agony of dualism. He even tried to make a covenant of partnership in order to establish a true kinship between himself and God. A deeper form of the human religious consciousness appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. This consciousness no longer rests upon power nor upon law but upon love. Love fills up the metaphysical distance and the moral chasm opened by sin; it brings together and unites that what was divided; it reconciles antinomies, frees man from the burden of nature and of his own sin. Man feels loved by God without conditions, and in turn enables him to love God without reserve. In this relationship of love the orphan finds a father, the sinner finds pardon, and feels springing up in the depths of his being a new life of power, hope, and joy. In short we can say that man always attempted to respond to the revelations of God corresponding to the degree of His inspiration. Man responded to the manifestation of force by sacrifices or magical prayers and to the manifestation of love he replied by faith alone, that is to say, by an act of confidence and the unreserved gift of the heart.⁶

The Catechism of the Catholic Church points out that:

“Throughout history down to the present day, men have given expression to their quest for God in their religious beliefs and behaviour like prayers, sacrifices, rituals, meditations and so forth.”⁷

The manifold religious rituals, the ardent devotional practices and the importance given to them in every culture and in every historical era helps one to understand that human beings are religious by nature:

“From one ancestor God made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for Him and find Him - though indeed He is not far from each one of us. For “in Him we live and move and have our being.”⁸

⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 371-372.

⁶ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 373-374.

⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 28, in: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P9.HTM, 18. 11. 12.

⁸ *Acts 17:26-28*, as cited in: Ibid.

Thus religion is not only a quest for the spiritual and ultimate reality-God, but also our response to this ultimate reality, which we call devotion.

II.3. Devotion: An act of Virtue of Religion

In general terms devotion to God can be understood as a state of mind or of heart in which everything-our whole life, and being, and possessions, are directed to God. Devotion is the attitude of the worshipping soul towards God. It calls into play all the forces and resources of man's personality. It, then, involves a deliberate movement of the will towards the object of worship. Devotion signifies a life given or devoted to God. A devotee no longer lives to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God.⁹

A. Tostain in the Dictionary of Mary describes devotion as following:

*“Devotion means ardour to serve God. It is the interior act of the will giving itself to God with generosity and fervour; the interior dispositions correspond to this will and maintain the soul in it.... Saint Thomas Aquinas deals with “devotion” in the Summa Theologica (II—II, q. 82) where he writes: “devotion is an act of the virtue of religion”. Saint Thomas points out that devotion is a gift of God but also a work of human beings, particularly as exhorted to pray, to meditate, to contemplate, all of which inspires love and engenders devotion.... In sum, devotion is the joyous dedication of the whole self to God (and to others for the sake of God), in living response to the gift He makes of Himself.”*¹⁰

However,

*“Devotion or a special devotion means a body of religious acts proposed or at least authorized by the Church, acts inspired by a special object (that to which the devotion is directed).”*¹¹

From the above statement we can judge that devotion requires a special “object”. This special object could be anything like a Mystery of God, a saintly person or it could even be sometimes things, images, places, etc. Both the spiritual activity of the devotion and the spiritual attraction that accompanies it, are centred around this object.¹²

⁹ Cf., Hastings, James, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 6, T. & T. Clark, 1930, P. 693.

¹⁰ Tostain, A., “Devotion” in: *Dictionary of Mary: Behold your Mother*, St.Pauls, 2008², P. 115.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cf., Ibid., P. 116.

*“Devotion also signifies a spiritual attraction, an attachment of love both to its object and to the acts or “practices” by which it is expressed. Hence devotion... includes a “personal” element, a choice and decision by the self - but the Holy Spirit must not be absent.”*¹³

This personal choice met by the self may be expressed in actions such as worshipping, praying, going on a Pilgrimage, meditating, practising asceticism, leading a monastic life, doing charitable deeds, making religious vows etc. These are known as exterior acts of devotion.

True devotion is fundamentally based on faith in the character of God and in His loving kindness. The ultimate purpose of practising “a devotion” is to come in contact with God and further to have a constant and conscious communion with God. Nothing works out in practising “a devotion” without a prayer, but prayers hardly ever occur in isolation. They are usually accompanied by gifts, which are manifested in the form of offerings and sacrifices or in the form of a special act of pledge or promise or oath to do something or not to do something. In the theological language this special act is called vow.

Establishing communication through offerings, sacrifices, and prayers or through a vow is designed to cause a supernatural power to produce a desired effect. Offerings and sacrifices have as a common denominator the fact that they are gifts. The act of giving involves three subsequent obligations: to give, to accept and to reciprocate. Therefore the offerings and sacrifices made in honour of the gods are the means for securing greater divine favours. The more abundant the gifts, the greater are the expected reward. In relationships with the gods, the interchange is crucial. With sacrifices and offerings, people “pay” the divinities for their harvests, success, health, rainfall and so forth. It is the familiar *do ut des* (“I give so that you will give”). Thus offerings and sacrifices were considered to be gifts, tributes or payments to the supernatural, as tangible manifestations of the principle of reciprocity seeking benefits for humans.¹⁴ A deeper insight into the concept of *do ut des* at this juncture will enable us to understand the underlying attitude in the devotional act of offerings and sacrifices.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Cf., Luján, Leonardo López, *The offerings of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan*, UNM Press, 2005, P. 35.

II.4. The Practice of “Do ut Des” in Religion

Do ut des, or ‘I give so you may give’, is the adage that expresses the principle of reciprocal relations in the past and present societies. John M. Robertson says:

“In the daily life of men a conscious reciprocity which begins as “do ut des”, “I give that you may give” can be and historically has been, for individuals and for the race, the matrix of a more loving and lovely sympathy, for normal sympathy must have been born of usage. If this holds of the reciprocities of men, it should be in theory, when we are classifying grades of religious belief, be recognized in the case of the imagined reciprocities of men and Gods.”¹⁵

Reciprocity, as expressed by the phrase ‘do ut des’, strings together the outward, physical fact, the visible set of actions, in any rite of sacrifice or offering. The notion of do ut des, that is, if the believer did his or her part, God will do His part, is reminiscent of the Greco-Roman perception of the relations between gods and mortals.

In all periods of the history of religion, the desire of the worshippers was to please, and to do that which was pleasing to him whom they worshipped and the offerings they took with them when they approached his presence was intended to be the outward and visible sign of their desire. The worshippers, as they draw near to their god, both physically and spiritually, take with them something material. And this they would not do, unless taking the material thing would express in some way, their mental, or rather their religious attitude. The fact that they carry with them some material thing, expresses in gesture language the desire that actuates them. Thus man approaches, bearing with him something intended to please the god that he draws near. But though that is part of his intention, it is not the whole. His desire is that the God shall be pleased not merely with the offering but with him. The fact remains that the worshippers would not come to the place of worship with the offering in their hands, unless they thought, that it was acceptable. And the desire to do that, which is pleasing to their god, is there from the beginning, as the condition on which alone they can enter His presence. Thus sacrifices came to be regarded as

¹⁵ Robertson, John M., *Christianity and Mythology*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004, P. 25.

gifts, or presents, made to the god, based on the underlying understanding of *do ut des*.¹⁶

As a gift, the sacrifice creates obligations. The devotee offers something to the deity, so that he or she may get something in return. Of course the devotee doesn't expect the same pig back that he or she has just slaughtered for God. The devotee expects in due course as a counter-gift something like a good harvest or success in business etc. Thus a sacrifice resembles a contract, it acquires a judicial component-my gift commits the god, morally at any rate, to giving me in return something I value. The commitment here is mutual, which means that the devotee will give thanks to the deity who has given him something by sacrificing in his turn again. There is a ceaseless cycle of obligation and gratitude, which the usual concentration on individual exchanges, expressed by the phrase *do ut des*, tends to obscure.¹⁷ This is how gratitude and piety go hand in hand with hopeful expectations.

The application of the principle of '**giving to get**' in the devotional act seem to reduce the religion to commercial principles, leaving behind an impression that God's favour is capable of being bought. Human intercourse with God seems to be governed by the same laws that apply to trading. This attitude of "**giving to get**" naturally raises the question, whether religion is not after all, a bargain with God? Is there such a thing as devotion to God that is not based upon received or anticipated gain? Or should religion be reduced to the fact that one does certain things for God with the hope that God will return the favour? Whatever may be the questions raised at this point of discussion, one cannot deny the fact that the mind-set of *do ut des* seems to be the characteristic feature of the religious behaviour common to the mass of people at all times. Devotion with underlying *do ut des* relationship between human and divine remains as a hallmark in the history of all religions at all periods.

Sanctification of something or somebody by setting it apart usually performed through some religious rites as dedicated to God also plays a vital role in religious devotional practices. True devotion calls the devotee to serve God in righteousness and true holiness all the days of his life by means of self-sanctification. Such devotion invites the devotee to offer oneself as a gift to god by a particular act of consecration. This dedication of 'Self' as a gift, is an offering of oneself as

¹⁶ Cf., Jevons, F. B., *The Idea of God in Early Religions*, Echo Library, 2009, Pp. 33-34.

¹⁷ Cf., Rüpke, Jörg, *Religion of the Romans*, Polity Press, 2007, P. 149.

completely as possible to the love and service of God. This act of dedication is not based on reciprocity, rather it aims at loving God more and doing his will more efficaciously. It is an offering of oneself to God for a higher purpose. This devotion of consecrating oneself transcends the principle of *do ut des*.

II.5. The Concept of Consecration

Generally speaking all the World Religions have sacred times, sacred texts, and sacred places. Although people practice various religions, they often receive the same powerful current of the spiritual gravity from the sacredness of religion. The distinction between sacred and profane is the defining characteristic of any religion. It can be said that religion remains defined as the means by which ‘sacredness’ is given form. When God calls His people to Holiness, He first calls them into consecration. *“In a more general sense, consecration is the act or ritual which invests objects, places, or people with religious significance, often by way of power and holiness.”*¹⁸

‘Consecration’ is a concept that seems to be at the heart of religion but it is not a word that appears in our everyday conversation. It is therefore necessary to examine the concept of consecration itself in order to have a clear notion about it.

II.5.1. Etymological Meaning

The word ‘consecrate’ is defined *“as the solemn setting apart of persons or things for some particular religious work or use.”*¹⁹ The Latin word used for ‘consecrate’ is ‘consecrare’ which means “to make wholly sacred - *con*, and *sacro*, to set apart as sacred - *sacer*, sacred.” The word ‘consecration’ comes from *cum*, which means ‘with’ and *sacrum*, which means ‘sacred’. It means making connection with the sacred.²⁰ The American dictionary of the English language defines the word “consecrate” as *“to make or declare to be sacred by certain ceremonies or rites; to appropriate to sacred uses; to set apart, dedicate, or devote, to the service and worship of God.”*²¹ The word “consecration” is defined as *“the act or ceremony of*

¹⁸ “Consecration”, in: Bowker, John (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, Oxford University Press, 1997, P. 234.

¹⁹ Feltoe, Charles Lett, “Consecration” in: Hastings, James (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 4, T. & T. Clark, 1911, P. 58.

²⁰ Cf., “Consecration”, in: Bowker, John (ed.), op. cit., P. 234.

²¹ Webster, Noah/Walker, John, *An American dictionary of the English language: exhibiting the origin, orthography, pronunciation, and definitions of words*, N. and J. White, 1838, P. 181.

separating from a common to a sacred use, or of devoting and dedicating a person or thing to the service and worship of God, by certain rites or solemnities."²²

The Hebrew word for "consecrate" is "qadash" (Kaw-dash).

*"The root form **qadash**, used within the religious register, covers the notions of both the sacred and the holy. In ancient religions, it expressed the majesty and activating power of the divinity. Used in Semitic languages with the meaning of "consecration and purification," it has a primary positive sense of consecration and belonging, and a secondary sense of separation: thus, the verb **qadosh** may be translated as "to be holy," "to be consecrated," "to be set apart"."*²³

The original catholic Encyclopaedia defines consecration as,

*"an act by which a thing is separated from a common and profane to a sacred use, or by which a person or thing is dedicated to the service and worship of God by prayers, rites, and ceremonies."*²⁴

Thus all the above etymological findings point out to one single fact that consecration is the act of the devoting or setting apart of anything as sacred to the worship or service of God.

II.5.2. The basic structure of Consecration.

In ritual and devotional traditions, the practice of consecration can even become a way of life for the people. But,

*"the significance of any single instance of consecration depends in good part on the type of object consecrated. Places and buildings are made into habitations for spiritual beings; higher powers enliven icons and food; kings and hierarchs are recognized as maintainers of a higher order on earth. Yet despite the diversity of both consecrated objects and the traditions from which their religious meaning derives, most instances of consecration reveal some basic structural resemblances."*²⁵

"First, an act of consecration is at root a creative act. It is a deliberate attempt to alter the environment, to establish in the visible world some definite, concrete means for fruitful interaction with the divine.

²² Ibid.

²³ Lacoste, Jean-Yves (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Christian Theology*, Vol. 1, CRC Press, 2005, P. 712.

²⁴ Schulte, A. J., "Consecration", in: <http://oce.catholic.com/index.php?title=Consecration>, 20.11.12.

²⁵ Gold, Daniel, "Consecration", in: Eliade, Mircea (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986, P. 59.

Second, a consecrated object, now represented as a link to higher reality, is often itself understood to be transformed - purified or empowered, transmuted into divine substance or given over to the divine.

And third as something extraordinary in its environment, a consecrated object is often ritually marked off, delimited from the mundane, everyday world.”²⁶

This basic structure of consecration is generally understood in religious tradition to be a human act, a personal deed. And hence sometimes the individuals may consecrate themselves with vows and resolutions. Before we plunge into the deeper understanding of the significance of consecration it would be very right to distinguish the word “consecration” from the words “resolution” and “vow” in order to avoid the misconception of the word consecration.

II.5.3. Consecration is neither a ‘Resolution’ nor a ‘Vow’

In the tradition of the Catholic Church there have been various practices of consecration like, the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, consecration of a diocese to a particular saint or to Mary and so on. These consecrations are expressed in a form of prayer and hence we can term it as ‘prayer of consecration’. The prayers of consecration, depending on the context in which a consecration occurs, on the person it is directed to, or on the people or the congregations, which undertake them can have a very diverse sense and a varying significance. Prayers of consecration can also include a vow or a resolution. But the act of consecration itself is neither a resolution nor a vow.

In a resolution, there is an intention to do something. What we intend to do may be something which is decreed or advised by God. In a resolution we deal with ourselves, with the intention of improving ourselves. But in a consecration we look away from ourselves to the person to whom we are consecrating ourselves, and the movement of our heart turns away from us over to another.

In a vow, we make a promise to God of a certain achievement by assuming ourselves a new, strict obligation. This achievement to which we obligate ourselves is to transfer someone over to the holy love of God, and thus in vows a consecration of a human being to God may also be included as the ultimate end of vows.

²⁶ Ibid.

However, its immediate content is the acceptance of an obligation towards a clearly defined, objective achievement. Consecration, however, goes directly from heart to heart. It is not the application of a mode of love, of a work in which love is supposed to grow and prove itself, rather it is the free streaming of love itself from person to person, from heart to heart.²⁷

II.5.4. The Essence of Consecration

The wide range of existing biblical and theological dictionaries and encyclopedias give a variety of explanation on the subject of consecration. But one fact remains the same. They all point out to the undeniable fact that ‘holiness’ or ‘sanctity’ is the essence of consecration. In this sense we can say that consecration is nothing else than *divinization*. René Laurentin describes the notion of divinization as follows:

*“The transformation of human life into divine life by the communication of the latter, offered to our participating liberty. This process is not a passage or crossing in the material sense from earth into heaven. Rather, it is a transformation, or transfinalization, or transfiguration of human life—a life penetrated, elevated, and supernaturalized from within by the gift of divine life, that is to say, by the love of God: his agape. It is given to us by means of consecration to know and love God as God, that is to say, by God's love, not by our own love. God realizes this transformation by means of grace.”*²⁸

Grace helps us to pass beyond the order of natural and scientific knowledge so that one may arrive at a connatural and existential knowledge of God, which comprises a special wisdom, intuition, and union. In this process, eros (egoistic love) will be transformed into agape. Agape is the divine love, which is capable of loving quite gratuitously, as God knows how to love, in giving more than in desiring.²⁹

The Bible states that holiness or sanctity at its source is God himself. Holiness is the ineffable transcendence of the Creator, the Being who possesses within himself his reason for being. God alone is holy and He created man in his image and communicated to him his holiness: “You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev 19:2). The Creator is the deep root and reason of our whole

²⁷ Cf., Rahner, K., *The need and the blessing of Prayer*, translated by Bruce W. Gillette, The Liturgical Press, 1997, Pp. 60-61.

²⁸ Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today: A Marian Model for a secularized Age*, translated by Kenneth, D. Whitehead, Ignatius Press, 1991, P. 135.

²⁹ Cf., Ibid., P. 136.

being, which has been created in resemblance to his. God's holiness seems to evoke awful respect and reverence within us but at the same time it attracts us even more to Him and invites us to approach Him. God proportions His holiness to our nature and wins us over to it, for He wants to share His happiness with us. This invitation to take part in God's Holiness calls us to move beyond sin in order to receive a direct communication with God's own life. Though we make efforts to move beyond sin, it is however God alone who really sanctifies us by divinizing our being and our actions, by an actualization proportioned to our nature.³⁰

The main object of consecration is to move man into the orbit of God, where God is the absolute centre of all spiritual attraction and gravitation. We gravitate around our Creator. From the knowledge of science we know that, once the satellite reaches the orbit, it will enter into a state of weightlessness and will henceforth accelerate itself without effort of its own, without further expenditure of energy. Using this knowledge as an analogy we can say that it is in this same way that those to whom God communicates his life enter into orbit around and move according to his love, for God is Love and He represents the most fundamental kind of attraction which is par excellence. Those who enter into the orbit of God's love are freed from the weight of sin, and, more radically from those attractions that serve egoistic pleasure and lead to the enslavement of knowledge, power, and possessions. Instead they depend on God and remain in a state of weightlessness. Thus in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas we can say "*Sanctificatio ... attenditur in hoc quod in Deo requiescat*" which would mean: Sanctification ... is to be found in resting in God. In other words we can say, sanctity is "reposing in God".

The metaphor of gravitation can be further extended to understand the human efforts required to reach God's orbit. Many difficult tasks requiring a great deal of energy are involved to move a satellite into orbit by overcoming gravity. Once the satellite reaches the orbit it will start to move in orbit without any effort on its own part with the help of the creative energy of the centre. In the same way the sacred objects and Instruments of worship that God has granted to man represent the means to overcome our animal gravity and to move into the orbit of God's love. This human effort itself is a product of the grace of God. Furthermore, we can say that while man orbits around God, the sacred objects of his worship orbit around him, because God

³⁰ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 137-138.

established them in service to man. The attraction that God exerts on us does not depersonalize us rather it brings about true personal fulfillment by means of the Divine Love itself. Each human person will be confirmed in his own existence as a personal subject by the personal and reciprocal encounter with the Divine Love. This is the only love that can fill or fulfill us without reservations, eternally. This is the supreme blessedness of God, namely the reciprocal gift of love in the Trinity and his sharing with creatures. Thus we are called to live an absolute Love, the Love lived by the three Persons of the Trinity who have adopted us and integrated us into their divine life.³¹

II.5.5. Consecration and Sacrifice

The word ‘sacrifice’ and the notion of ‘consecration’ are sometimes understood as identical. This temptation of understanding them as identical concepts arises, because, sacrifice implies always a consecration. Hence it should be remarked here that we need to have a clear picture of the difference between both to understand the effects of consecration.

“In every sacrifice an object passes from the common into the religious domain; it is consecrated. But not all consecrations are of the same kind. In some the effects are limited to the consecrated object, be it a man or a thing. This is, for example, the case with unction. When a king is consecrated, his religious personality alone is modified; apart from this, nothing is changed. In sacrifice, on the other hand, the consecration extends beyond the thing consecrated; among other objects, it touches the moral person who bears the expenses of the ceremony. The devotee who provides the victim which is the object of the consecration is not, at the completion of the operation, the same as he was at the beginning. He has acquired a religious character which he did not have before, or has rid himself of an unfavourable character with which he was affected; he has raised himself to a state of grace or has emerged from a state of sin. In either case he has been religiously transformed.”³²

The Subject who comes into the possession of the benefits of the sacrifice or who undergoes the effects of the sacrifice is named as ‘sacrifier’. This ‘sacrifier’ could be sometimes an individual and sometimes a collective body. While performing the sacrifice, the sacrificer is affected through his presence at the sacrifice and through the interest or part he takes in it. Any action of sacrifice produces a

³¹ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 139-141.

³² Carter, Jeffrey (& ed.), *Understanding religious sacrifice: A reader (Controversies in the study of religion)*, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003, Pp. 90-91.

double effect. One on the object for which it is offered and upon which it is desired to act, the other on the moral person who desires and instigates that effect. Sometimes the effects of a sacrificial consecration are exerted not directly on the sacrificer himself, but also on certain things which are more or less directly connected to his person. For example if a person performs a sacrifice while building a house, the sacrifice has its effect on the house, which impacts the quality of the house. The acquired quality can survive longer than its owner. The thing consecrated serves as an intermediary between the sacrificer, or the object, which is to receive the practical benefits of the sacrifice, and the divinity to whom the sacrifice is usually addressed. This is exactly the distinctive characteristic of consecration in sacrifice.³³

In a sacrificial consecration 'Man' and 'God' are not in direct contact. No matter whether a portion of the offering is destroyed on the altar by fire or blood is shed or hair is offered in the act of sacrifice, the subject who sacrifices is in direct communication with God only through the part of his person which is offered up. There is indeed no offering in which the object consecrated is not likewise interposed between the god and the offerer, and in which the latter is not affected by the consecration. Sometimes the object consecrated is simply presented as a votive offering and the act of consecration can assign it to the service of God, but it does not change its nature by the mere fact that it is made to pass into the religious domain. For example the first fruits, which were brought to the temple as offering, remained there untouched and were considered as possession of the priests. On the other hand, in other cases consecration can also destroy the object offered up. For example, if an animal is offered on the altar, the desired end is reached only when its throat has been cut, or it is cut to pieces or consumed by fire, in short, sacrificed. The object thus destroyed is the victim. Whether the offering remains untouched or destroyed partially or completely the mechanism of consecration remains the same in all cases.³⁴

After making this short exploration, we can conclude that a religious act of consecration affects the personality of the sacrificer directly and modifies the condition of his moral attitude or that of certain objects with which he is concerned.

³³ Cf., *Ibid.*, P. 91.

³⁴ Cf., *Ibid.*, P. 92.

II.5.6. Substantial elements of Consecration

In any act of consecration the one who makes the consecration and the one to whom it is directed are two different realities. Therefore it is necessary at this part of our discussion to analyze the substantial elements that constitute a consecration. Fr. Engelberts Zeitler gives a detailed analysis on the substantial elements of consecration in his dissertation on “Die Herz-Mariä-Weltweihe” in the year 1954. I find his analysis on this theme as an excellent explanation, which will enable us to grasp the substantial elements in a simple and clear manner. The following is the summary of his analysis.

“Every act of consecration consists of an objective and a subjective element, which are connected by the symbolism of the consecration.

*a. **Objective Presupposition.** The foundation for any act of consecration in the true sense of the word lies in the transcendental nature of the subject to whom the consecration is directed, which in consequence establishes a corresponding relationship of dependency. The degree of dependency is determined by the specific character of the Consecration. If the subject is transcendental in the strict sense of the word, then it captures or seizes the consecrated person in its totality and draws it to itself as the ultimate goal. In this sense consecration is possible only to the divine person. Any creature can be the object of consecration, as far as it participates in the transcendental character of God. The degree of the participation in the transcendental character also remains as a determinable factor. It gains through this consecration certain rights concerned to the consecrated person and it will be confirmed in its rights respectively. In this sense we can consecrate ourselves at the supernatural level to Angels and Saints and at the natural level to all those, to whom God has entrusted the corresponding dignity and authority. If, however, a creature participates in the transcendental nature of God, in such a way, that by God’s free decree this creature has been not only entrusted with certain powers for few specific people or for specific spheres of life, but also has become a necessary means for the whole of humanity in order to attain the goal, then this fact obliges the whole of humanity for a total dedication. Such a dedication goes far beyond any recognition of the patronage rights and on the one hand could be compared to the total dedication to God as the ultimate goal but on the other hand should remain totally different from the consecration to God. The reason for this is that no creature could be the final goal but only serve as a way to the goal.*

*b. **Subjective Presupposition:** Every act of consecration is an open confession of this objective relationship of dependency, which is expressed in a symbolic act (Consecration in fieri) and which*

ultimately results in a life of dependency acknowledging this relationship as a competent one (Consecration in esse).

*c. **The symbolism of Consecration:** It has its origin in the body-mind-nature of the human being and shows the already existing or the newly established relationship between the consecrated person or the things and to the one to whom the consecration is directed. It demands at the same time a corresponding moral attitude and an appropriate acknowledgement of this objective relationship. Thus consecration is essentially an interior act of the mind and will, but at the same time assumes a corresponding outward form or certain ritual which if necessary can have a public character. Every act of consecration is directed to a person because only a person can have the power over the one who consecrates. These powers determine the character and degree of consecration. If the powers are absolute, then the devotion of consecration is the symbolic recognition of the absolute. The expression of the acknowledgement of the absolute power allows itself to manifest in various degrees, which to a great extent depends on the intention of the one who consecrates oneself. For instance, the dedicated object which symbolically recognizes the supremacy and sovereignty of God can be either completely or partially withdrawn from its profane use or it can still remain in the service of God also at the level of natural use. One can finally consecrate only those things over which one has legal authority or jurisdiction. The private consecration comprehends only the private sphere of life while a public consecration is limited to one's public jurisdiction. The consecration of a community can be done only by the person who has been empowered by office or who has been specially commissioned by the duly authorized representative of the community in accordance with the relevant religious and legal standards. In this way every act of Consecration gains its special character through the following three factors: 1. Through the subject to whom the consecration is directed and who determines the degree of consecration through his objective essential supremacy. 2. Through the person who performs the consecration and his public or social position which determines the scope of his jurisdiction or competence. 3. The intention of the consecrating person which determines the kind of acquired obligations.”³⁵*

Having gained a clear knowledge about the subjective and objective elements which constitute the consecration let us now proceed to examine the significance of consecration in the World Religions.

³⁵ Zeitler, Engelbert P., *Die Herz-Mariä-Weltweihe: Dogmatisch-zeitgeschichtliche Schau*, Steyler Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1954, Pp. 15-17, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

II.6. The Significance of Consecration in World Religions

The act of consecration has its foundation in a principle of reverence for the Deity, and a conviction of the propriety of embodying that reverence in suitable expressions of outward devotion, though it has frequently been accompanied with superstitious, absurd, and even impure rites. The obligation of such acts of consecration has been always felt among the people of various faiths in spite of the dissimilar forms of worship.³⁶

“This act, either from the first or in the process of time is naturally accompanied by some announcements to the congregation of what is being done or intended, and by some forms of prayer asking for the Divine approval and blessing; but no such accompaniments are really essential to the consecration itself, though they increase the dignity of the occasion and tend to general edification.”³⁷

The practice of consecration of persons to the Divine is found right from the remotest times. In the early cult of the Egyptians and other pagan nations the rites of consecration are mentioned.

“Among the Semitic tribes they consisted in the threefold act of separating, sanctifying, or purifying, and devoting or offering to the Deity. In the Hebrew Law it was applied to the entire people whom Moses, by a solemn act of consecration, designates as the People of God.... Among the Romans no matter whatever was devoted to the worship of their gods like fields, animals, etc., was said to be consecrated, and the objects which pertained intimately to their worship (temples, altars, etc.) were said to be dedicated. These words were, however, often used indiscriminately, and in both cases it was understood that the object once consecrated or dedicated remained sacred in perpetuum.”³⁸

The Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Persians, Hindus, and all other Pagan nations considered particular persons, animals, plants, rivers, mountains, groves etc., as naturally consecrated to the service of the particular deities. But besides this natural consecration, the consecration of individual persons, places and things accompanied by solemnities and ceremonies were the most important part of worship in almost every form of religion.³⁹

³⁶ Cf., “Consecration”, in: Brewster, David (ed.), *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 7, Oxford University, 1830, P. 174.

³⁷ Feltoe, Charles Lett, “Consecration”, op. cit., P. 58.

³⁸ Schulte, A. J., “Consecration”, op. cit.

³⁹ Cf., “Consecration”, in: Brewster, David (ed.), *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, op. cit., P. 174.

II.6.1. Consecration in Greek and Roman Religions

It is very remarkable to notice that in most religions not only persons, places and things were consecrated; but among the Greeks there was also the practice of consecrating the dead persons.

“By the Greeks, all dead persons were thought to be under the jurisdiction of the infernal deities; and, therefore, no man could resign his life till some of his hairs were cut out, as an offering by which he was consecrated to them, and especially to the Proserpine (goddess of the underworld). They were also consecrated by having peculiar honours conferred on their memory, such as celebrating the anniversary of their death, erecting monuments, statues or altars to them, according to the degree of virtue which they were supposed to have attained, or the eminent public services which they had performed. Some were even raised to the level of gods.”⁴⁰

The Greeks and Romans, consecrated all their religious edifices, whether temple or tombs, with the offering up of Prayers and sacrifices by the officiating ministers of religion. For example the Roman augur consecrated the sepulchres, or burying places, both private and public and also the walls and gates of the Cities. But the presence of the Pontifex Maximus was required during the dedication of a temple. Animals and birds were also consecrated both by the Greeks and the Romans. The Greeks devoted to their gods whole herds of cattle and several kind of birds like geese and peacock. Even fishes were devoted to their gods. The Romans consecrated all the cattle that were produced from the first of March to the end of April through a ceremony called *ver sacrum*. The consecration of images, statues and trees among the Greeks had the same pattern of consecrating the altars. Magical consecration was common among the Romans. To protect the empire from all dangers, the emperors had the custom of offering sacrifices, repeating charms and erecting statues in certain crucial situations.⁴¹

The above mentioned details point out to the reality that Christians were not the first ones to introduce the practice of consecrating or dedicating persons or things to religious purposes and the rite of consecration has played a very significant role right from ancient times.

⁴⁰ Ibid., P. 175.

⁴¹ Cf., Ibid., P. 176.

II.6.2. Consecration in Hinduism

Hinduism is not a single coherent religion, but a fellowship of faiths, which differ widely in theory as well as in practice. The ritual worship in Hinduism is called *Puja*. It is a worship of an image or an iconic form of a deity, or the worship of a sacred or powerful person, animal or objects. In Hinduism there are Major Deities and minor deities. The Major Deities are truly divine and can grant salvation. Whereas, the minor deities are finite souls who, due to their past deeds, are reborn in godly form but they are imperfect, ignorant, bodies subject to birth and death and can grant only rewards in this present world but cannot grant salvation. *Puja* may be performed to a Major Deity or to a minor deity, who is regarded as a manifestation of that Hindu's Supreme Being.⁴²

The purposes of *Puja* include salvation, the forgiveness of sins committed both in the past and in the present lives, the pleasing of the deity concerned, peace, happiness, health, longevity, wealth, protection from various evils etc. The *Puja* should be carried out without selfish motives in order to attain salvation.⁴³

The central physical repositories of spiritual power in Hindu temples are not relics but images. The devotees see the images as a manifestation of the deity itself. In their ritual worship, devotees interact with the deity as a person with whom they attempt to come into intimate terms. Deities in household shrines, on the other hand, are treated more like guests who may only be visiting the house for a particular festive occasion. In order to perceive the divinity in these images, the performance of a consecratory rite may be particularly crucial. Through this rite, the deity enters into and dwells in that image. This consecratory rite is called *Pranapratishta*, which means 'the establishment of life into the image'. The household consecration ceremony, which is performed for the *Ganesa*, the elephant-headed deity reveals how human beings can put life into divine images.⁴⁴

"In the ritual's central act (prânapratisthâ) the worshiper installs vital breath into the image. But to do this the worshiper himself must first take on the aspects of the divine through preliminary consecrations. To align his microcosmic world with the macrocosm, the worshiper makes brief utterances while touching parts of his body and his ritual implements, identifying himself as

⁴² Cf., Sheth, Noel, *Hindu Parallels to the Eucharist*, in: Vidyajyothi Journal of Theological Reflection, Vol. 62, No. 9, September 1998, Pp. 690-691.

⁴³ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 692-693.

⁴⁴ Cf., "Consecration", in: Eliade, Mircea (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, op. cit., P. 60.

the primal cosmic being and the implements as cosmic elements. The breath is installed in the deity when, to the accompaniment of a priest's recitation of particular utterances, the worshiper touches the image with a kind of grass understood to be a potent conduit. At the climax of this rite, the worshiper understands both himself and the deity to have a common identity in the cosmic life force. This identity is then invoked in further ritual worship that includes feeding the deity and sprinkling it with water, both important aspects of consecratory ritual in many Indian traditions."⁴⁵

The material statue, after being consecrated becomes the abode of the deity for some and for many others the image is transformed into a body of the deity. There are some who do not distinguish the consecrated image from the deity. But some modern Hindus claim that the consecrated image is only a symbol of the deity.

Temporary images can also be deconsecrated by: first ritually requesting the deity to leave the image and then immersing the image in a river or in the sea. This can be seen very clearly during the annual festival of *Ganesa*.

*"When Ganesa's visit is over, usually within ten days, the worshiper symbolically closes the image's eyes by brushing them with the same kind of grass he used to enliven it. The breath is then said to leave the clay image, which is immersed in a nearby source of water and will be dissolves. In separating from each other, both breath and clay return to a state that is both formless and timeless; but through their Interpenetration in the enlivened image, the ritual transformation of a material form has helped to consecrate a particular time."*⁴⁶

One of the most common practices carried out in temples and shrines on a daily basis, during which the image of a deity is ritually bathed is called *Abhiseka*, which means consecration. This fundamental ceremony ranges from the simple bathing of a deity with water or milk to the ritual consecration of a whole temple (*kumbhabhiseka*). The *Abhiseka* is considered to renew the power of the deities within. In the more complex *Abhiseka* ceremonies, performed in the larger temples, the deity might be ritually bathed with a variety of different substances ranging from turmeric water, considered to be cooling and purifying, to honey, fruit and curds. The quantity of ingredients used at an *Abhiseka* ceremony is dependent on what is offered by the devotees or the funds of the temple. However, the simple act of showering

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

flowers, water or milk on a deity also represents a very personal act that reinforces the relationship between deity and devotee.⁴⁷

The *Abhiseka* ritual is generally followed by *arti* and by the decoration of the deity. *Arti* or *Arati* is the act of worshipping a deity with light.

*“At the end of the puja rituals, the deities being worshipped are made an offering of light. One, or more commonly five, lights are placed on a tray, which is waved in a circular, clockwise motion in front of the deity. The five lights symbolize the five elements of earth, air, fire, water and ether. Together they represent the totality of the cosmos and everything in it.”*⁴⁸

The priest recites the mantras appropriate for the particular god or goddess while the *arti* lights are being offered to the deity. He also rings a small bell in order to gain the attention of the gods. The priests also distribute to the devotees after the *arti* ceremony has taken place holy ash known as *vibhuti* or sacred food known as *prasada*, which consists of usually flowers or fruits, that have been offered to the deity.⁴⁹

*“Arti also refers to the prayers recited or sung during the waving of the arti lights. Each deity has his or her own prayer, which honours him or her and reminds the supplicant of his or her greatness. The arti ceremony marks the conclusion of the puja rituals, after the deities have been honoured. It is at this time that the supplicants offer their prayers up through the medium of the arti flame. (...) This ceremony can be quite intense as it is a time when a connection is established between the divine and human worlds.”*⁵⁰

Thus we can conclude that consecration in Hinduism consists in particular rituals, which bring into actuality the divine presence in or through a representation. Through this act of enlivening an image the Hindu worshiper is identified with the primordial cosmic person.

II.6.3. Consecration in Islam

The technical term for the state of consecration in Islam is known as *Ihram*. The one who is in this state is called *Muhrim*. The word *Ihram*, in the normal usage

⁴⁷ Cf., Foulston, Lynn, “*Abhiseka*”, in: Cush, Denise/Robinson, Catherine/York, Michael (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Routledge, 2008, Pp. 2-3.

⁴⁸ Foulston, Lynn, “*Arti*”, in: Cush, Denise/Robinson, Catherine/York, Michael (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, op. cit., P. 43.

⁴⁹ Cf., Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

of the language is used only to denote two states of conditions, namely, the state of consecration, in which one performs *umrah* or *hadjdj*, and the state of consecration during the *salah*. The word *Ihram* can also refer to the clothes in which one performs *hadjdj* and *umrah*.⁵¹ In other words,

*“The state into which the pilgrim is required to put himself on the occasion of **hajj** or **umrah** is called **ihram** (from haram meaning prevention or forbidding), or entering upon a state in which a particular dress is put on and certain acts, ordinarily lawful, are forbidden.”*⁵²

*“The consecrated state required for the performance of canonical prayer (**salah**) is also called **ihram**. (...) **Ihram** begins with the pronunciation of the words **Allahu akbar**, that is the **takbir** which opens the prayer (**salah**), and ends with **assalamu alaykum**, the salutation that closes the prayer. In order to enter into the **ihram** of pilgrimage, the pilgrim has to perform the greater ablution (**ghusl**) and makes the intention (**niyyah**), indicating what kind of pilgrimage he will perform namely, **ifrad**, **tamattu’**, or **qiran**, and pronounces the **ta’awwudh** and the **basmalah**. After this act the pilgrim wears the costume of **ihram**.”*⁵³

The Holy Prophet has given a clear instruction to what dress the *muhrim* (the man entering into a state of *ihram*) should put on. He says that the *muhrim* should not put on a shirt or a turban or trousers or a cap, nor a dress coloured by wars (red) or saffron (yellow). If he does not find shoes, he can put on leather stockings (*khuffain*). This *ihram* dress consists of two large pieces of sheets that must be unstitched and seamless. One piece of the sheet reaches from the navel to below the knees and the other sheet covers the upper part of the body. Both these sheets must preferably be white. The *ihram* dress of two seamless sheets dates back to Abraham and the simple patriarchal dress has been preserved until today in *hajj* to give the pilgrims a practical lesson in simple living.⁵⁴

Only men put on the costume of the *ihram*. The Pilgrim wraps the lower cloth (*izar*) around the waist and tucks it in place to hold it firm. He drapes the upper cloth (*rida*) over the left shoulder, and knots it on the right side near the waist. The right shoulder is left bare, but during prayer it should be covered with the *rida*. No other

⁵¹ Cf., Wensinck, A. J./Kramers, J. H., (eds.), *Handwörterbuch des Islam*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1941, P. 199.

⁵² “*Ihram*”, in: Muhammad Ali, Maulana, *The Religion of Islam*, eBookIt.com, 2011, P. 372, (my emphasis).

⁵³ “*Ihram*”, in: Glassé, Cyril/Smith, Huston, *The new Encyclopedia of Islam*, Rowman Altamira, 2003, P. 207, (my emphasis).

⁵⁴ Cf., Id., P. 372.

clothing is worn, but during cold weather it is allowed to cover oneself with a blanket for warmth. In practice pilgrims can wear belts with pouches, fastened with rivets rather than sewn and they can also carry a shoulder bag (also unsewn) to hold their documents.

Women can enter into the consecration of *ihram*. They do not wear special clothing but they can wear their ordinary clothes. They cover their heads to conceal the hair and the body is covered to the wrist and to the ankle. Veils are not worn to cover their face, but the head- covering is worn close to the face. The ritual ability to perform pilgrimage is not affected by menstruation, nor is it prohibited for a menstruating woman to enter the Grand Mosque of Mecca (*al-Masjid al-Haram*).⁵⁵

The Pilgrim before wearing the *ihram* dress must take a bath and performs a two *raka'at* prayer. He recites the *talbiyyah*: *Labbayka-Llahumma labbayk*, which means: "At Thy service, God! At Thy service!". From this point on the *talbiyyah* becomes the recurring invocation of the state of *ihram*.⁵⁶

The state of *ihram* requires a much disciplined life in order to maintain the hygiene of the soul and body.

*"Once the state of ihram is assumed or even before that, from the beginning of the journey to Makkah, one may not make sexual contact, cut the hair, pare the nails, use perfume, cut a green tree or kill an animal, with the exception of noxious insects, rodents or venomous animals such as snakes or scorpions. (...) The state of ihram is brought to an end by shaving the head, or much more commonly by cutting off a small, symbolic, lock of hair."*⁵⁷

The pilgrims should wear *ihram* at the latest before entering the boundary of the *haram* extending round the city of Mecca. But the pilgrims can also wear *ihram* already, when they begin their journey from home or from homeland. They can also wear it at the point of entry to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, namely, Jeddah. Once the pilgrim has entered the consecrated state, whether for the *hajj* or for the *umrah*, he or she is obliged to fulfill the entire rites unless one is prevented from doing so due to some reasons of big importance. From the time that *ihram* is put on, until the end the words of the *talbiyyah*, are constantly recited by the pilgrims.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Cf., Id., P. 207.

⁵⁶ Cf., Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Cf., Ibid., P. 208.

There are three possibilities for the Pilgrim to enter into *ihram* based on fulfilling the intention of *umrah* or *hajj*.

The first possibility is known as ***Ifrad***. Here the pilgrim puts on the *ihram* with the intention of fulfilling the *hajj* alone on or before, arriving at *miqat* (Mekkah). *Ihram* comes to an end once the *hajj* is completed and the pilgrim assumes a fresh, second state of *ihram* at one of the points situated on the verge of the sacred area (*haram*). Then the pilgrim performs the *umrah*.⁵⁹

*“This kind of pilgrimage, performed as two separate acts, is called a **mufrid bi-I-hajj** while performing the **hajj** and **mufrid bi-I-umrah**, while performing the **umrah**. This is also the technical term for the pilgrim.”*⁶⁰

The second possibility is called ***Tamattu***. The pilgrim here puts on the *Ihram* intending to perform the *umrah* during, or before, he or she arrives at *miqat* (Mekkah).⁶¹

*“On completion of the rites, the state of *ihram* is foregone until the 8th Dhu l-Hijjah, when the garb of *ihram* is donned once more in Mecca - without going to the periphery of the sacred zone - and the *hajj* is performed. The pilgrim is called a *mutamatti*.”*⁶²

The third possibility is known as ***Qiran***. Here the pilgrim puts on *ihram* with the intention of performing the *hajj* and the *umrah* together, and it is not put off until both are accomplished. The pilgrim performs the *umrah* first and then the *hajj*. The pilgrim is then called a *muqrin*.⁶³

Having explored the various dimensions of consecration in Islam let us now proceed to understand the concept of consecration in Judaism.

II.6.4. Consecration in Judaism

The *Torah* gives instructions to the Jews to bring holiness into their lives by various acts of consecration. In the Jewish liturgy the underlying thought, which runs through the entire liturgy is, that God has commanded them to make their actions sacred or holy. For example the Jew before eating the food makes a *Bracha* (*berakhah*) or blessing over the food in order to declare that it is holy to accept God's

⁵⁹ Cf., Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., (my emphasis).

⁶¹ Cf., Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Cf., Ibid.

bounty with gratitude. Choosing Holiness by departing from sin and choosing the sacred instead of the mundane is the fundamental challenge within the religious Judaism.⁶⁴

*“The term consecration is commonly utilized within liberal Judaism for a ceremony recognizing the completion of the first full year of religious study by the students. In ‘Reform’ and ‘Conservative’ Judaism, many synagogues expect students to begin intensive after-school religious study in third grade; this is commonly the grade that includes a consecration ceremony.”*⁶⁵

The Hebrew word for holiness is *qedushah*. Holiness is essentially an attribute of God. The striving towards holiness by human beings in an ethical sense means, one aims to attain moral purity and perfection by imitating the divine attributes and through right conduct. Holiness is attained by human beings to the extent that he/she consciously models his/her life and conduct on the well-known attributes of God. For example, just as God is merciful, so you too must be merciful; as he is gracious, you too must be gracious. The basic concept of holiness is rather one of “separateness”.⁶⁶

*“Israel is separated as a holy people; the priests and Levites are separated as a holy caste responsible for the Temple ritual; the Sabbath is separated as a holy day; the Temple itself was out of bounds to profane access, and objects belonging to it, including, for example, sacrificial animals, were holy; that is, separate from profane use. The obligation of holiness falls on the individual as part of a holy people, and any shortcomings on the part of the individual reflect on the entire people.”*⁶⁷

One should understand that the separation, which is implicit in holiness, is not regarded as a withdrawal from the world and its temptations. Judaism insists on the attainment of holiness by remaining separate from contaminating things but still living in their presence. Holiness in Judaism is understood as a regulative principle in the everyday life of men and women and not as an abstract or mystic idea. It is attained not by escaping from this world, nor by renouncing the human relationship with the family, but by the spirit in which the obligations of life in its simplest and commonest details are fulfilled. The rabbis are of the opinion that human beings have

⁶⁴ Cf., “Consecration”, in: Karesh, Sara, E./Hurvitz, Mitchell, M., *Encyclopedia of Judaism*, Info base Publishing, 2005, P. 98.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cf., “Holiness”, in: Werblowsky, Zwi, R. J./Wigoder, Geoffrey (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, Oxford University Press, 1997, P. 330.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

only to set their feet on the road to holiness to receive divine aid in order to attain it.⁶⁸

The Bible speaks about the dedication of a person or thing for special and holy use. It also speaks of the consecration ceremonies in connection with Kingship and Priesthood. This ceremony consists in anointing with oil, and, in the case of priests, also with the blood of a sacrifice. It also speaks of the consecration of vessels intended for use in the Tabernacle by anointing them with oil. The altar was of special importance, and sacrificial offerings formed part of its consecration ceremony, while special sacrifices were offered at the dedication of the Temple.⁶⁹

“The Hebrew word Hanukkah stands for the dedication ceremony. In the Bible there is an explicit reference to the formal dedication of the three biblical sanctuaries: the Sanctuary in the wilderness (Nm. 7), the Temple of Solomon (I Kgs. 8; Chr. 5-6, as well as Ps. 30—the Psalm of Dedication), and the Second Temple (of the altar, Ezr. 3.9-12; and of the Temple, Ezr. 6.16-18). In the post-biblical period, the rededication of the Temple by Judah the Maccabee three years after its desecration by the Syrians led to the institution of the eight-day festival of Hanukkah (I Mc. 4).”⁷⁰

There was also the custom of dedicating the Homes during biblical times (Dt. 20.5), but this custom disappeared in course of time. Later in the nineteenth century,

*“the British chief rabbinate composed a prayer for **hanukkat ha-bayit** (dedication of the house), which includes Psalms 30 and 15, those verses of Psalm 119 that acrostically spell the word **berakhah** (blessing), and special words of dedication.”⁷¹*

In post-biblical times (it encompasses the eras of history that follow after the conclusion of events as recorded in the Bible.) there are records of consecration ceremonies at the establishment of new synagogues. But for the consecration of a synagogue there is no standard or statutory service. It usually includes Psalm 30 and seven circuits of the synagogue with scrolls of the *Torah*.⁷²

⁶⁸ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 330-331.

⁶⁹ Cf., “Consecration”, in: Roth, Cecil (ed.), *The standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, Massadah Publishing Company Ltd., 1958/9, P. 480.

⁷⁰ “Holiness”, in: Werblowsky, Zwi, R. J./Wigoder, Geoffrey (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, op. cit., P. 194.

⁷¹ Ibid., (my emphasis).

⁷² Cf., Ibid.

The ceremony of consecrating an adolescent boy to the observance of the commandments is known as *Bar Mitzvah*. This ceremony, which is connected with the initiation of children to religious studies, can be traced back to rabbinical times.⁷³

II.6.5. Consecration in Buddhism

In most of the world religions the fundamental practice of worship is usually worshipping of the divine. But in Buddhism this is not the case with Buddhism, for two reasons:

*“First, Theravada Buddhists hold that the nature of a **buddha** after his death cannot be specified, that he has passed beyond existence as a limited individual being. This being so he cannot any longer be thought of as a ‘person’ who might respond to human actions.... It thus seems inappropriate to say that Theravadins ‘worship’ the Buddha. A more neutral description is to say that they show devotion to the Buddha and what he represents. (...) Secondly, and more importantly, most classical Buddhist descriptions of the path to liberation are based on the triad of ‘morality, meditation and wisdom’, with meditation being the key practice. Nevertheless, devotion plays a part here, as it can help purify the mind, and thus aid morality and meditation.”⁷⁴*

From the above mentioned reasons we can understand that in Buddhism the ultimate reality is not personalized, as a God. Therefore it is not a religion, which is focused on all-powerful creator God.

*“It is seen in more impersonal terms as a state to be attained or realized: **nirvana**. The personal dimension comes in when one looks at those who experience this reality: for Theravada Buddhism, **arahats** (saints) and earthly **buddhas**; for Mahayana Buddhism, Heavenly **buddhas** and advanced **bodhisattvas**, who are on the brink of buddhahood.”⁷⁵*

In Buddhism there is a lack of contrast between human and divine. Almost all the schools of Buddhism accept a wide range of divine beings, who through their good deeds have attained heavenly rebirths.⁷⁶ This is explained as follows:

*“**Buddhas**, **arahats** and **bodhisattvas** are said to be ‘teachers of humans and gods’, and even gods are said to revere the ‘three treasures’: **the Buddha**, **the Dhamma** and **Sangha**. Here, the **Dhamma** is the **buddhas**’ teaching, the timeless truths they point to, the path of practice, and the states realized on the path,*

⁷³ Cf., “Consecration”, in: Roth, Cecil (ed.), *The standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, op. cit., P. 480.

⁷⁴ Harvey, Peter (ed.), *Buddhism*, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001, P. 125.

⁷⁵ Ibid., P. 95.

⁷⁶ Cf., Ibid.

*culminating in nirvana itself. The **Sangha**, as a 'treasure' or 'refuge', are those who have fully or partially realized **nirvana**, who are conventionally symbolized by the monastic community, also known as the **sangha**.*"⁷⁷

In Theravada Buddhism, a very deep faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha is common.

'Taking the refuges' is the key expression of Buddhist devotion and commitment. But the meaning of every single refuge differs according to various traditions. The understanding of the Theravada Buddhism is expressed using chants from Pali canon.⁷⁸

*"The ancient formula for this, in its Pali form, begins: **Buddham saranam gacchami, Dhammam saranam gacchami, Sangham saranam gacchami**. This affirms that 'I go to the Buddha as refuge, I go to the **Dhamma** as refuge, I go to the **Sangha** as refuge'. (...) The notion of a 'refuge', here, is not that of a place to hide, but of something the thought of which purifies, uplifts and strengthens the heart. (...) The 'refuges' remind the Buddhist of calm, wise, spiritual people and states of mind, and so help engender these states. Their value is denoted by the fact that they are also known as the **Ti-ratana**, or 'three jewels': spiritual treasures of supreme worth."*⁷⁹

Among the Buddhists, the separation between lay people and *Sangha* is marked by consecrating the area of the compound and installing ritually a boundary stone.

*"In Theravada Buddhism monks and laity are represented as two orders in society, each with its own role in the economy of salvation. The monks, through observing their ascetic code, help maintain the cosmic order; the laity should serve the monks. These two roles are played out in different physical spaces, with a boundary between them. (...) Monks may leave the compound for specific monastic duties but not to gossip in the village; villagers should enter the compound to serve the monks. In addition to the definite but sometimes unmarked boundary around the extended monastic compound, the observance hall, where monks are ordained and make group confession, has a marked boundary of its own. This boundary is denoted by stones - called **sima** stones - that are installed according to prescribed rites; it is normally respected by laypersons, who must remove their shoes to enter the*

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Cf., Ibid., P. 127.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

observance hall. Here, then, ritual consecration expresses a crucial socio-religious division visible in this world."⁸⁰

Thus the concept of institutional boundary (*sima*) plays an important role in Theravada Buddhism. This monastic boundary demarcates the special space set aside for ordination, the recitation of monastic rules, and confession. Once a piece of land by *Sima* is consecrated, it should not be used for any other purpose. The sacred building of the Monastery is protected by nine boundary stones, one buried at the center of the building and the eight other stones are located at the major and minor directions around the perimeter. This is explained as follows:

*"The Consecration ceremony called "planting the boundary stone" (Thai, **pluk sima**) or "burying the symbol" (Thai, **fang luk nimit**) begins with a chant to purify the plot of ground. The monks invited for the occasion stand in the middle of the **bot** and perform four Pali chants to remove the potency of previous boundary stones (Thai, **suat thon**), before consecrating the new boundary markers first as the "place not without three robes" (**ticivaravippavasa**) and then as "the place of the association of equals" (**samanasanavasa**), saying, "O **bhante**, may the Sangha hear me. The Sangha now consecrates the *sima* which the Sangha has set aside as a place where the **bhikkhus** may keep the **uposatha** in equality, making it an area not without the three robes, a place set apart from houses and door yards." Four monks then leave the **bot** and engage in a question-and-answer chant before each **sima** stone, beginning at the east and then moving in a clockwise direction to the seven other boundary stones. One of the four monks asks, "What is the symbol of the east?" The other monks answer on behalf of the earth and the **sangha**: "The stone is the symbol." This formula is repeated twice before each stone is buried. The four monks then enter again the **bot** and declare that the **sima** markers have been properly installed. A ninth stone is lowered into the ground in the middle of the **bot** with all members of the **sangha** present. Unlike the perimeter boundary stones that are designated simply as **baddha-sima** (boundary stones), the ninth stone is called the **buddha-sima**, suggesting that this stone implants the presence of the Buddha in the center of the most sacred **sanghawat** structure."⁸¹*

In Theravada Buddhism paying homage to the image of Buddha plays an important role. One is reminded of the Buddha's struggle for enlightenment, his virtues, his teachings and the ideal represented by him during this homage. Images function more than reminders and they are seen as infused with the spirit and power of the being they represent. Since the image is seen as an actual form of the being, it

⁸⁰ "Consecration", in: Eliade, Mircea (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, op. cit., P. 59.

⁸¹ Swearer, Donald, K., *Becoming the Buddha: The Ritual of Image Consecration in Thailand*, Princeton University Press, 2004, P. 43.

must have the traditional form and symbolism and be consecrated.⁸² The consecration of such images is done in a unique manner:

*“This is done by chanting prayers and mantras over it; by placing in it scriptures or relics, and even internal organs of clay, and by completing and wetting the eyes. This associates it with holy sounds and objects, giving it a power-for-good, and animates it, the wet eyes suggesting the response of a living gaze.”*⁸³

*“A temple image seems to act as more than a reminder, for it is generally thought that it must be consecrated before it can function as a focus for devotion. Consecration involves the placing of relics in the image, and a monk reciting some Pali verses over it. (....) This harmonizes with the fact that the eyes are often completed at around 5 am, the time at which Buddha became fully enlightened. These two aspects seem to suggest that the consecrated image is seen as a representative of, rather than just a representation of, the Buddha.”*⁸⁴

The initiatory ritual of consecration in Tantric Buddhism is known as *abhiseka*, and the highest level involves four initiations or consecrations:

*“The Vase or Jar, the Secret, the Wisdom-gnosis and the Word or ‘Fourth’. The Vase or the Jar consecration gives permission to practice the Generation stage and the three later consecrations apply to the Completion stage.”*⁸⁵

A brief outline about the Jar consecration will help us to understand the importance of the consecration at the highest level.

*“The Jar consecration is normally sub-divided into water, crown, **vajra** (sceptre), bell and name initiations for the Yoga and Highest Yoga **tantras**. (....) The royal associations of these consecrations cannot be missed: water brought from all the sacred rivers of India was used for royal anointing in ancient times. The crown refers not only to a royal diadem but also to the **usnisa**, bump on the head of a Buddha. This betokens wisdom and is one of the 32 marks of a **mahapurusa**, a person destined to be either a fully enlightened Buddha (**samyak-sambuddha**) or a universal monarch (**cakravartin**). The **vajra** is the diamond-hard indestructible truth; it is also the thunderbolt of Indra, a royal sceptre. The bell initiation is also known as the Sovereign or the Royal consecration.”*⁸⁶

⁸² Cf., Harvey, Peter, *Buddhism*, op. cit., Pp. 131-132.

⁸³ Ibid., P. 132.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., P. 163.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Pp. 163-164.

From these various consecration ceremonies and rituals we can understand that in Tantric Buddhism, people perform regular consecrations for their own spiritual benefits, whereas in Theravada Buddhism, the disciplined life and the inner purity of the monk of the *Sangha* is very important.

II.6.6. Consecration in Christianity

One cannot overlook the significance of the rite of Consecration among the Christians after the foundation of their faith. Consecration of Popes, Bishops, Presbyters, deacons, deaconess (from the time of Cyprian and Tertullian) and dedication of virgins to the service of religion (long before the establishments of Convents) could be traced very clearly in the history of the church in various instances.⁸⁷

There are very little evidences during the first three centuries of the Christian era about the regular rites or ceremonies practiced in dedicating places or buildings. There is no recorded service of dedication of any building until the cessation of the persecution of Diocletian. Thereafter the affairs of the church became more settled, and many places and buildings were carefully restricted to the religious purposes. However there was a notable incident of the dedication of the Church in the name of Paulinus, which took place at Tyre in the year 314 A.D. There was a large gathering of Bishops, clergy and people on this occasion and there was an apparent celebration of the without any distinctive initiatory ceremony. Eusebius himself preached the inaugural sermon on this occasion. It was the first recorded instance of dedication of the Church. This first recorded instance has a unique historic value for two reasons: (i) This ceremonial celebration was a kind of consecration service. (ii) It was a kind of consecration of a Church what we today call a 'dedication'. This would mean that the Church was consecrated under the title of a patron saint.⁸⁸

Churches of this type seem often to have been known by the names of their founders or other great persons connected with that place or by some great Christian doctrine or event. The other type of churches was connected with the tombs of the martyrs and saints. The custom of keeping the anniversary of such person's death (*natalis*) or burial (*depositio*) by a service at their grave and holding services more

⁸⁷ Cf., "Consecration", in: Brewster, David (ed.), *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, op. cit., P. 175.

⁸⁸ Cf., Feltoe, Charles Lett, "Consecration" in: Hastings, James (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, op. cit., P. 59.

frequently more than once a year gradually grew. This took place generally in the catacombs at Rome and in the burying places (*cemetria, polyandria*), where their very tombstones were used as the altar for the consecration of the Sacred Elements. A third type of church points out to the tradition of adapting the buildings, which were once subjected to secular or heathen purposes to Christian buildings. In many cases the old building was pulled down and a new one was built with the old materials. This was the origin of the *basilica* form of Church. Considerable diversities prevailed as to the ceremonies connected to the dedication of the church not only at the initial stage of growth of the church, but this diversity lasted in the west until the Middle Ages.⁸⁹

The Roman church was originally inclined to a severe simplicity in matters of ritual. The ceremonies and forms of prayers, which are still in use in the Roman Church, have got a 'Gallican' flavour (the Gallican ceremonies point out the idea of adapting Christian baptism of persons to the dedication of buildings). The rites, which are distinctive of consecration proper in the West, are ultimately derived from the East (e.g. from the byzantine ritual).⁹⁰

*"The Roman Catholics, besides an immense multitude of superstitious ceremonies employed at the consecration of almost everything used in their religious service, such as bells, candles, water, oil, images, crosses, rosaries apply the term **consecration** in a most peculiar sense to the benediction of the elements in the Eucharist, by which they are conceived to be instantaneously converted into the real body and blood of Christ."*⁹¹

In Roman Catholic tradition Communion, by means of sharing of consecrated food is deliberately identified as a mystery and it requires a consecrator, who is legitimately ordained in the church, to be effective.⁹²

*"The priest, reenacting the role of Jesus at the Last Supper, utters over the offerings a formula taken from the Gospels: "Take, eat; for this is my body." During the act of consecration, the priest is understood to represent Jesus, and for his act to be valid, he must be unambiguously acknowledged by hierarchs recognized as true successors to the apostles. Thus the consecrator himself needs to be consecrated."*⁹³

⁸⁹ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 59-60.

⁹⁰ Cf., Ibid., P. 60.

⁹¹ "Consecration", in: Brewster, David (ed.), *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, op. cit., P. 176.

⁹² Cf., "Consecration", in: Eliade, Mircea (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, op. cit., P. 61.

⁹³ Ibid.

The rite of ordination to priesthood highlights not only the priest's sacramental authority but also expresses his spiritual inheritance through apostolic succession. The laying on of hands in the rite of ordination for bishops, priests and deacons dates from early Christian times. It is usually accompanied by a prayer for the personal and religious welfare of the ordinand. But above all it expresses the continuity of saving grace, which is passed on from the elders to the juniors through the generations.⁹⁴

Thus we can say that the rituals of consecration in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church “*from the consecration of the bishop as successor to the apostles of Jesus to the transformation of ordinary foodstuffs into the body of Christ*”⁹⁵ without any doubt “*make the power of a divine personage of the past present in today's world.*”⁹⁶

II.6.6.1. Consecration from the Biblical Perspective

Biblically speaking, Consecration means to move an object or a person from the domain of the profane into the sacred domain of God. It is a process of divinization. There are moments where consecration is seen as an exclusive initiative of God. For example, when God gave the Ten Commandments or when He took possession over the Ark of the Covenant. God also wanted a number of things to be consecrated to him, namely, the Sabbath day, the first fruits of harvests and all the firstborn male members of the human race. The sacredness of the consecration lies not in the external rites or in the material component but essentially lies in the sacrifice of the heart (Ps 51: 10-19; Jer 31:33; Amos 5:21; I Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11-16, 58:1-8; Hos 6:6). When the fullness of time came, Christ himself became the sign and symbol of Holiness. He was consecrated from within by His own Divinity. In Him everything was realized divinely and the divine became a visible reality.⁹⁷

II.6.6.2. The Essence of Christian life is Consecration

The Sacrament of Baptism is the first and fundamental consecration. The Sacrament of Baptism is the initial consecration of the Christian in Christ and it

⁹⁴ Cf., Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 123-126.

includes incorporation into His mystical Body.⁹⁸ The code of Canon Law points out this reality in clear terms.

“The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God. For this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and royal function, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each.”⁹⁹

“From their rebirth in Christ, there exists among all the Christian faithful a true equality regarding dignity and action by which they all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ according to each one’s own condition and function. All the Christian faithful must direct their efforts to lead a holy life and to promote the growth of the Church and its continual sanctification, according to their own condition.”¹⁰⁰

From the above quoted Canon law one can understand that:

“The essence of the Christian life” is to be found in consecration. God himself saw to this in order to effect the divinization of man. (...) Incorporated in the body of Christ, which is the Church, Christians are necessarily consecrated to God; therefore, they are sanctified by God. In the New Covenant, Christians actually realize and embody the precept that was merely enunciated in the Old Testament: “You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev 19:2; also 20:26). The saying of Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew confirms this: “You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48).”¹⁰¹

Thus in Christian life incorporation of oneself into the mystical body of Christ is considered as consecration. This is accomplished by means of faith and baptism, which result in charity.¹⁰²

II.6.6.3. Personal and Canonical Consecrations

The first Consecration through the Sacrament of Baptism serves as the basis for other personal and Canonical consecrations, which play a vital role in the Roman Catholic Church.

⁹⁸ Cf., Ibid., P. 126.

⁹⁹ *Codex Iuris Canonici*, No. 204, §1.

¹⁰⁰ *Codex Iuris Canonici*, No. 208, 210.

¹⁰¹ Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 35.

¹⁰² Cf. Ibid., P. 36.

*“The life consecrated through the profession of the evangelical counsels is a stable form of living by which the faithful, following Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, are totally dedicated to God who is loved most of all, so that, having been dedicated by a new and special title to His honor, to the building up of the Church, and to the salvation of the world, they strive for the perfection of charity in the service of the kingdom of God and, having been made an outstanding sign in the Church, foretell the heavenly glory. The Christian faithful freely assume this form of living in institutes of consecrated life canonically erected by competent authority of the Church. Through vows or other sacred bonds according to the proper laws of the institutes, they profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience and, through the charity to which the counsels lead, are joined in a special way to the Church and its mystery.”*¹⁰³

*“By divine institution, the sacrament of orders establishes some among the Christian faithful as sacred ministers through an indelible character which marks them. They are consecrated and designated, each according to his grade, to nourish the people of God, fulfilling in the person of Christ the Head the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing.”*¹⁰⁴

According to Canon law there is not only consecration at the level of Sacraments but also at the level of Sacramentals, which are instituted by the church. The distinction between Sacraments and Sacramentals is clearly explained by René Laurentin in the following manner:

*“**Sacraments** ... are signs normally carried out by a priest, representing Christ; these signs are assumed or taken up by Christ so that what the sign signifies visibly is unerringly realized. **Sacramentals**, which were instituted by the Church rather than by Christ himself; these Sacramentals operate at several levels; they can be either consecrations or benedictions....”*¹⁰⁵

II.6.6.4. Consecration of Objects

Objects of Sacred worship are also consecrated. But theologically speaking only persons can be formally consecrated in a vital and lasting way. The consecration of objects must be understood in terms of *analogy of attribution*. They remain holy

¹⁰³ *Codex Iuris Canonici*, No. 573, §1, 2.

¹⁰⁴ *Codex Iuris Canonici*, No. 1008.

¹⁰⁵ Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 129.

as long as they are used as instruments for sacred worship and rituals. The kind of holiness attributed to the objects has no growth potential because objects are not vital things. Therefore consecrated objects are nothing but means, which contribute to human sanctification.¹⁰⁶ In other words, we can say that “*the consecration of objects does not sacralize the object itself but rather sacralizes its purpose as a sign and instrument of God intended to sanctify men.*”¹⁰⁷

II.6.6.5. Consecration to a heavenly human being

The general understanding of consecration is that it is directed to God, to the triune God. However, in the traditional practice of the Church there are also consecrations, which are not addressed to God but to angels and saints in heaven and above all to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The custom of consecrating oneself to Mary is one of the ancient religious practices of the Christian believers. This practice of consecrating oneself to a heavenly human being is a very unique feature in Christianity. Many raise questions on the validity of such a consecration. Karl Rahner explains the notion of consecration to a heavenly human being, namely, Blessed Virgin Mary as follows:

*“A consecration, and the love for a human being in the blessed community of the saints in heaven which is activated in it, are in their deepest content of being an act of the love of God. (...) If we consecrate ourselves to a heavenly human being, the movement of our heart doesn’t go to him in order to end with him, but rather it goes to him, as it were, right through him in order to soar further into God.... That applies above all to the consecration to the blessed Virgin and her “heart” (that is, the quintessence of her love of God which has become eternity, the symbol of the sincere wholeness of her pure nature which belongs totally to God). Whoever consecrates himself to this love and really knows what he is doing and what the act of his heart is moving toward in such a consecration, he must be drawn into the eternal movement of love of the heart of the virgin. This leads one to love God and finally consecrate oneself to Him.”*¹⁰⁸

At this point one can raise the question: How can one consecrate himself to the heavenly being? What does it mean to consecrate oneself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is a creature? Vorgrimler’s explanation would help us to clear the doubts

¹⁰⁶ Cf., Ibid., P. 133.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Rahner, K., *The need and the blessing of Prayer*, op. cit., Pp. 73-74.

and would help us to understand the notion of consecration to Mary in a meaningful manner. He says:

“Whoever thinks that he may have in his experiences perceived the obligation to ‘consecrate’ his life, should clearly realize what consecration lastly means so that he does not substitute a creature, to whom he wants to ‘consecrate’ himself, to the place of God. ‘Consecration’ is an act of accumulated, intensive love of God, a radical movement of the human heart towards the heart of God with the sincere intention never to let this movement torn apart until death; yes, even to make death itself into such a consecration: I put the most precious that I possess, my life, into your hands. A creature can be included in such an act of consecration, if it is absolutely certain that the creature itself in its life lived such a radical love for God. This would make it possible to join, so to say; such a love is directed towards God. This is also the case with consecration to Mary.”¹⁰⁹

II.7. Conclusion

Having navigated through the system and custom of consecration practices and representations in various religious eras, one cannot deny the undisputed fact, that all religious exercise has their own rite of consecration, which possesses a vital significant character that underlines the very essence of all religions. Christianity is nothing but a devoted movement toward an eternal Love by means of consecration. Popular devotions cultivated the practice of devoting oneself to God. Consecration as a way of life demands perpetual vigilance, an acting out of the tension between divine truths and temporary realities. One of the divine truths is that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the first and the most consecrated woman of human race. The faithful discovered very early the important and indispensable role played by Mary in the plan of salvation. Since then people turned to her at various situations for various reasons. They began to imitate her virtues and values. The desire to belong to her in a

¹⁰⁹ Vorgrimler, Herbert, *Wiederkehr der Engel: Ein altes Thema neu durchdacht*, Butzon & Bercker, 1991, Pp. 19-20, (translated by Fr. Heinz Werner Schneider). The original Quote: „Wer aus seinen Erlebnissen die Verpflichtung heraushört, sich selber und sein Leben einer besonderen „Weihe“ zu unterstellen, der muß sich im klaren darüber sein, was „Weihe“ in ihrem tiefsten Kern ist, damit er eine Kreatur, der er sich etwa „weihen“ will, nicht mit Gott verwechselt. „Weihe“ ist ein Akt gesammelter, intensiver Liebe zu Gott, eine radikale Bewegung des menschlichen Herzens auf das Herz Gottes zu, mit dem ernstesten Willen, diese Bewegung bis in den Tod hinein nicht abreißen zu lassen, ja den Tod selber zu einer solchen „Weihe“ zu machen: In deine Hände lege ich das Kostbarste, was ich habe, mein Leben. Eine Kreatur kann in einen solchen Akt der „Weihe“ nur einbezogen werden, wenn von ihr sicher feststeht, daß sie selber in ihrem Leben eine solche radikale Liebe zu Gott verwirklicht hat; wenn es also möglich ist, sich ihrer Liebesbewegung gleichsam anzuschließen. Bei Marienweihe ist es auch so“.

unique way paved the path for the birth of consecration movements. The faithful started placing their trust and confidence in the Blessed Virgin Mary and began to offer themselves to her through an act of consecration. And hence it is necessary for us to examine and analyse in detail in the following chapter about the historical significance of the devotional practice of consecrating oneself to Mary in the life of the Church.

III. The Historical Significance of Consecration to Mary in the life of the Church

III.1. Introduction

The Church's Journey of faith with Mary throughout the centuries was not just a journey, which led to the formulation of doctrines alone. This journey reached into the very dimension of human feelings, especially the feelings of being attached or united. This feeling of closeness or attachment with Mary resulted in the various experience and expressions of devotion towards her. Therefore we can generally say that "*devotion to Mary*" is nothing but the feeling of attachment that the faithful have towards Mary.

The word *devotion* is derived from the Latin verb '*sese devovere*' which means '*to commit oneself*' or '*to vow oneself*'. But devotion is more than commitment. It carries a sense of attachment with it and hence devotion can be understood as a *committed attachment* with a high sense of loyalty and faithfulness directed towards the person of our devotion. One of the important elements regarding devotion is that, it cannot remain passive just only as an inner experience. Devotion to another person will necessarily find ways of expressing itself in the form of giving gifts or writing books or some expressions of love with direct messages, which symbolically speak of the value we hold in other person. Devotion to Mary found its dramatic expression in hymns and songs, in liturgy, art, music and architecture in honour of Mary throughout the history of the Church at various places on this earth. These expressions had its own specificity, which varied according to different culture, different periods of history and according to individual temperaments. Thus a wide range of devotions towards Mary has developed on the basis of time, place and culture.¹¹⁰

The birth of various devotions to Mary greatly depends on the understanding of the great truths of Mary in the history of Christianity. These Truths about Mary were recognised not just by the first Fathers of the Church and by the great Councils but also by Christians down through the centuries. The devotion to Mary is deeply rooted in the Catholic Church both in the official liturgy and in the personal life of the believers, for the last twenty centuries. Here we are not dealing about the

¹¹⁰ Cf., Cameli, Louis, J., *Mary's Journey*, Sadlier, William H. Inc., 1982, Pp. 69-73.

devotion to God but about the devotion to a heavenly human being called Mary because,

“Mary (is seen) as a creature of the Father, like all other creatures, as the mother of the Son who came to take flesh in our world, and as the woman who was present in the praying community of Pentecost and belongs, through the Spirit, to the community of saints which is the church.”¹¹¹

III.2. Problems connected with Marian Devotion

Marian devotion yesterday, today and in the future has a great deal to do with the *image* and *role* of Mary. Catholic devotion to Mary was criticised at various turning points of the modern era especially by the Protestants, because it involves improper worship of human creature. But one should also admit that the improper view of Catholic devotion to Mary paved the way to the various misgivings about Marian devotions and also to its theological trends. Neuner explains the accusations made by the Protestants in the following manner:

“Protestants often accuse Catholics of worshipping Mary, historians of religion consider Mary the Christian heiress of the great mother goddesses of the ancient Mediterranean world. Such accusations, often caused by extravagant forms of veneration and confidence, are greatly unfair, but they create the impression that in Christian life Mary is more important than Jesus himself.”¹¹²

Mary's privileges were highly exaggerated which lead to the presenting of an unreal, disincarnate image of Mary. There was a general tendency to supernaturalize Mary's earthly life. Legends emerged and filled up the silence of the Gospel. These legends presented the image of Mary as totally opposite to that of biblical Mary.¹¹³ Schillebeeck comments to these exaggerations as follows: *“Love gave her a thousand names but... that love which uninformed tends to express itself in exaggeration or give a false interpretation.”¹¹⁴*

Marian devotion can only be comprehended in relation to the Christian belief in the “communion of saints”, an article of faith preserved even in the Apostles' Creed. The communion of saints is clearly a scriptural teaching that is emphasized in

¹¹¹ Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, *Mary in the plan of God and in the Communion of Saints: Towards a common Christian Understanding*, (translated by Mathew J. O'Connell), Paulist Press, 2002, P. 15.

¹¹² Neuner, Josef, *Mary, Mother of the Saviour*, Theological Publications in India, 2004, P. 5.

¹¹³ Cf., *Ibid.*, Pp. 5-6.

¹¹⁴ Schillebeeckx, E., *Mary Mother of the Redemption*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1964, Pp. xiv-xv.

the New Testament references to the cloud of unseen witnesses and the mystical Body of Christ. Any devotion, whether it be to Mary or any other saint, that does not have Jesus as its centre, is an improper devotion. Based on this understanding of devotion, the faithful are invited to have filial devotion to Mary. But in Christian religious practices we see that the Blessed Virgin Mary is venerated, honoured and loved more than all other saints and angels and she receive these exalted devotions from the faithful. The reason behind this exalted devotion is that the definition of Mary's divine motherhood encouraged the people to trust in her motherly mediation. People turned to her in every need and they believed that she had the power to wrest the souls of those who had surrendered their lives to her, from the clutches of Satan. Though Jesus was recognized as the source of grace, the faithful depended more on Mary as their most important and powerful channel. She was viewed as a mediatrix who could go between the powerful persons whose patronage we seek, a loving mother who offers protection and who prays on behalf of us. It evokes an impression that Mary takes away the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one and only Mediator between God and man. It also raises the questions: Why can't we offer our prayers directly to God and why should we go through the channels? How can a creature of God be worshipped and adored like God? Is the devotion to Mary in harmony with the total life of Christian Faith?¹¹⁵

The theological excesses, the exalted language, the exaggerated devotions led to many controversial issues concerning the devotion to Mary. The mode of veneration of Mary raises critical questions concerning the worship of adoration and worship of veneration. At this juncture it is necessary to free the mind from being gripped by all sorts of wrong notions concerning devotion to Mary by presenting a proper understanding about the importance and necessity of veneration to Mary. We need to have a clear understanding about two fundamental questions, namely: What is devotion to Mary and what are the underlying principles for the exalted devotion to Mary?

III.3. The Underlying Principle in Veneration to Mary

To understand the underlying principle regarding veneration of Mary, it is worth clarifying the terminologies which are used to indicate the measure of

¹¹⁵ Cf., Cameli, Louis, op. cit., P. 67, ; Cf., Neuner, Josef, op. cit., Pp. 6-7.

reverence that are due to those persons to whom the devotion are offered by the faithful.¹¹⁶ The term “worship” is used as a general term in the schools of theology, which would include both adoration and veneration. But the word “worship” is not a synonym for adoration and it could be used to introduce either adoration or veneration. The term “worship” is used by the Catholic sources sometimes not to indicate adoration, but only the worship of veneration given to Mary and the saints. This led to confusion and to the misunderstanding by some that Catholics offer adoration to Mary in a type of idol worship given to Mary. Adoration of Mary can never be part of authentic Catholic faith and life,¹¹⁷ because:

*“Adoration is an act of religion in which the human mind and will acknowledge God’s infinite sovereignty and supreme dominion over His creature. It is expressed externally by an attitude of reverence and by words of praise. The highest type of worship is reserved for God alone and is called **latría** by theologians.”¹¹⁸*

*“In the Eastern Church, the term **latreia** was used to refer to the worship that is due to God - to Christ and the Trinity - and the term **proskynesis** (which literally means ‘bowing’ or ‘prostration’) was used for the devotion that should be offered before the holy icons.”¹¹⁹*

One of the areas in which the Latin translation of the decrees of Nicaea showed a great deficiency was in rendering such clear terminologies. This resulted in misunderstanding as to what the Council really intended.¹²⁰

The Western Church used the word *dulia* — a word that literally means ‘service’ in reference to the honour due to the saints, who are human beings.¹²¹ The saints though they are human beings they truly excelled in their pursuit and attainment of Christian holiness. Due to this attainment of holiness our Lord grants the saints in Heaven an ability to intercede for those on earth who are in the process of pursuing holiness. This is a basic principle of the Mystical Body of Christ and the

¹¹⁶ Cf., Boss, Sarah Jane (ed.), *Mary: The Complete Resource*, Continuum International Publishing Group, Limited, 2009, P. 156.

¹¹⁷ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary: The Heart of Marian Doctrine and Devotion*, Queenship Publishing, 2006, P. 14.

¹¹⁸ Buono, A., *Hyperdulia*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 197.

¹¹⁹ Boss, Sarah Jane (ed.), op. cit., P. 156.

¹²⁰ Cf., Ibid.

¹²¹ Cf., Ibid.

communion of saints. The term *dulia* refers to a simple veneration due to such saints who excelled in Holiness and in their love for God.¹²²

When we speak of veneration, we can speak not only about a simple veneration but also a special veneration for honouring a created person whose excellence rises above that of every other created person. This special level of veneration is called *hyperdulia*, which means something like ‘super-service’ or ‘more-than-service’. The Blessed Virgin Mary is owed such type of special veneration, which is obviously greater than that of the veneration due to the other saints. This special veneration of the Blessed Virgin will remain ever inferior to the adoration that is due uniquely to God alone but it will always surpass the honour accorded to the saints and angels combined. Blessed Virgin Mary deserves this veneration because of her unique position as Mother of God. This unique status as Mother of God indicates that she is marked out above other holy men and women.¹²³

The Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the Sacred Liturgy brings out this unique status of the Mother of God in an excellent form. The article 169 says:

*“Among the saints in heaven the Virgin Mary Mother of God is venerated in a special way. Because of the mission she received from God, her life is most closely linked with the mysteries of Jesus Christ, and there is no one who has followed in the footsteps of the Incarnate Word more closely and with more merit than she: and no one has more grace and power over the most Sacred Heart of the Son of God and through Him with the Heavenly Father. Holier than the Cherubim and Seraphim, she enjoys unquestionably greater glory than all the other saints, for she is “full of grace,” she is the Mother of God, who happily gave birth to the Redeemer for us... She became our Mother also when the divine Redeemer offered the sacrifice of Himself; and hence by this title also, we are her children. She teaches us all the virtues; she gives us her Son and with Him all the help we need, for God “wished us to have everything through Mary.”*¹²⁴

A clear conception of what distinguishes the veneration rendered to God from the veneration rendered to Mary, to the saints or to the holy things is often missing in the depth of the popular consciousness. But the Catholic theologians accept the triple

¹²² Cf., Miravalle, Mark, op. cit., Pp. 14-15.

¹²³ Cf., Ibid., P. 15, ; Cf., Boss, Sarah Jane (ed.), op. cit., P. 156.

¹²⁴ Pius XII, *Mater Dei*, No. 169, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei_en.html. 11.05.13.

distinction made by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure since thirteenth century.¹²⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* says:

*“Since, therefore, the Blessed Virgin is a mere rational creature, the worship of latria is not due to her, but only that of dulia: but in a higher degree than to other creatures, in as much as she is the Mother of God. For this reason we say that not any kind of dulia is due to her, but hyperdulia.”*¹²⁶

The Canon 1255 in the Code of Canon Law of 1917 summarizes these distinctions as follows:

*“To the Most Holy Trinity, to each of the persons who belong to it, to Christ our Lord, even under the sacramental species, is due to the **cultus of latria**; to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the **cultus of hyperdulia**; to the others who reign with Christ in heaven, the **cultus of dulia**.”*¹²⁷

The Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium* No. 66 summed up the distinctions of veneration very clearly from the point of view of Marian Devotion:

*“Placed by the grace of God, as God’s Mother, next to her Son, and exalted above all angels and men, Mary intervened in the mysteries of Christ and is justly honored by a special cult in the Church. (...) This cult, as it always existed, although it is altogether singular, differs essentially from the cult of adoration which is offered to the Incarnate Word, as well to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and it is most favorable to it.”*¹²⁸

This special Veneration - *hyperdulia*, given to Mary remains far away from any suspicion regarding idolatry worship of Mary for two reasons:

(1) “It is an honour rendered to a creature who has carried out a unique role in the History of Salvation and has through grace attained the heights of sanctity and glory, but remains a creature nonetheless; she remains, for the Christian tradition, the “servant of the Lord”. (2) The veneration of Mary is neither a substitutive for, nor something independent from, nor an alternative to the

¹²⁵ Cf., Richer, Etienne, *Marian Devotion, The Rosary, and the Scapular*, in: Miravalle, Mark I., (ed.), *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, Queenship Publishing, 2007, P. 677.

¹²⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, [= ST], IIIa pars, q. XXV, art.5, as cited in: Ibid., P. 678.

¹²⁷ *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Romae: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1917) canon 1255: “...*Beatae Mariae Virgini cultus hyperduliae; aliis cum Cristo in caelo regnantibus cultus duliae.*” As cited in: Ibid., P. 678.

¹²⁸ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 66, in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 11.05.13.

worship owed to the Trinity. It is willed by God and has God as its end."¹²⁹

Thus we can conclude that devotion to Mary does not detract us from our intimacy with God. It rather promotes us to approach God with more confidence in the company of the Mother of God. Mary is neither our Redeemer nor our source of salvation but she leads us to the Redeemer, her Son and to salvation. This knowledge has been gained not through some abstract principles but through the teachings of the history, where we find that the first generation of believers who reflected on the Christian revelation inevitably saw the link between Mother and Son, the New Eve and the New Adam. This is the origin of the "*To Jesus through Mary*" path. The fundamental theme of Marian devotion is of going "*to Jesus through Mary*".

The most complete and highest form of Marian devotion lies in consecrating oneself totally to her and in living out this consecration. Consecration of oneself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and carrying out this outstanding devotion into everyday life in the living out one's spirituality has played a remarkable role both in early times and in modern times.¹³⁰ At the heart of mystery of consecration one can certainly find Mary, because she is the creature closest to God and who shares the greatest intimacy of love with God. But above all she remains the model and prototype of consecration.¹³¹ Therefore an exploration of the significance of Mary and the creative expressions and development of Marian devotion in the history of the Church at various turning points of the centuries will help us to situate Mary in her place as a special creature with her unique role. This exploration down through the ages will provide us the necessary background and stage to understand not only the devotion of consecration to Mary and its significance, but also help us to understand that the emergence of various Consecration Movements as a remedy for the suffocations experienced by the Christians in the world.

III.4. The historical development of Marian Devotion

Pope John Paul II once made the following remarkable statement: the story of Mary's pilgrimage is the "story of all human beings." Therefore one can draw out the conclusion that the history of devotion to Mary is closely related to the history of the

¹²⁹ Buono, A., *Hyperdulia*, op. cit., Pp. 197-198.

¹³⁰ Cf., Most, William, G., *Our Lady after Vatican II*, St. Paul Publications, 1972, P. 134.

¹³¹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 162.

Church and its renewal. The devotion to Mary has marked the life of the Church and has frequently been the “Barometer,” which indicated the state of Catholic life right down through the history.¹³² Let us take a closer look at it.

III.4.1. Marian Devotion in the Early Church

As we journey through the various stages of the living tradition of the early Church, we can affirm that at the very beginning of the Christian era, devotion to Mary seems to have been non-existent. She was present in the Church but very little explicit mention is made of her. One can understand this fact because the beginning of the Christian era was dominated by the memory of the Risen Lord and by the anticipation of his second coming.¹³³

Leo Scheffczyk affirms that there are traces of the devotion to Mary from the time of the apostles onwards. He explains this in the following manner.

“The germs of Marian devotion, which we find in the New Testament, experienced a marked development only after the Council of Ephesus (431). Nevertheless one cannot overlook the growth of interest in the person of Mary and a certain observation of the unusualness in her life even before the Council. The first traces of acknowledgement and devotion to the Mother of Jesus are present from apostolic times onwards. This can be traced back for instance in the apocryphal gospels (the proto-gospel of James in the middle of the second Century) or in the apocryphal acts of apostles (the Acts of Peter). But unfortunately in these apocryphal writings it is expressed rather in an awkward and theologically not legitimate way. It is here that we find for the first time ornamental epithets or titles for Mary. So, for instance, she is called the “immaculate virgin” in the Passion of the Apostle Andrew (from the third century) and her virginal womb is compared with the earth of paradise. The Apocrypha writings were time and again a welcome source for the later developing legends about Mary, in poetry and in art. But they did not offer solid ground for a Marian devotion that was looking for essential elements.”¹³⁴

The first historic indication concerning the veneration of Mary is manifested in the Roman catacombs. From the end of the first century until the first half of the second century, Mary is depicted in *frescos* in the Roman catacombs both with and without her divine Son. A very significant fresco was found in the catacombs of St.

¹³² Cf., Cunningham, Agnes, *The Significance of Mary*, The Thomas Moore Press, 1988, P. 127.

¹³³ Cf., Ibid., P. 128.

¹³⁴ Scheffczyk, Leo, *Maria: Mutter und Gefährtin Christi*, Sankt Ulrich Verlag, 2003, P. 223, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

Agnes, which depicts Mary between St. Peter and St. Paul with her arms outstretched to both. This fresco reflects, in the language of Christian frescoes, the earliest Symbol of Mary as “Mother of the Church”. From the number of representations of Mary and their locations in the catacombs it is very clear that Mary was also recognized for her maternal intercession of protection and defense. Her image was depicted on tombs and also on the large central vaults of the catacombs. It is very evident that the early Christians who gathered in the catacombs prayed to Mary as intercessor to her Son for special protection and for her motherly assistance. From the beginning until the first half of the second century one can observe that Mary’s role as spiritual mother was recognized and the faithful invoked her protective intercession.¹³⁵

The invocation of the faithful for Mary’s help and their faith in her mediation is based on the role played by her in the economy of salvation. The answer given by Mary to God’s call, her *fiat* was an event linked with the eternal destiny of human beings. Therefore we can say that Mary is strictly bound to us in building up of our future in God. She is a creature perfectly obedient to God and in complete solidarity with us.¹³⁶

The recourse to her in order to obtain graces and help could have arisen from the awareness of Mary’s cooperation in the work of our redemption and her mediating role with her Son. Though this hypothetical conclusion doesn’t have any explicit historical documentation as support, one cannot neglect the truth that, there are indirect indications that the Mother of God was called upon and invoked by the faithful from the beginning of Christian era. From third century onwards we find some clear evidence of an explicit reference to the Blessed Virgin in the liturgical prayer of the Church both in the East and in the West. In the “*Anaphora of Hippolytus*” of Rome we find the first evidence of an invocation, which is directly addressed to Virgin Mary.¹³⁷ The text with its mention of the Virgin Mary is as follows:

“We give you thanks, O God, through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom in these last days you have sent to us as Savior and

¹³⁵ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 41-42.

¹³⁶ Cf., Gambero Luigi, *Patristic Intuitions of Mary’s Role as Mediatrix and Advocate: The Invocation of the Faithful for her help*, in: *Marian Studies*, Vol. LII, The Mariological Society of America, Dayton, 2001, P. 78.

¹³⁷ Cf., *Ibid.*, P. 99.

Redeemer and as the angel of your will; He that is your inseparable Word, through whom you made all things, and who is well-pleasing to you; whom you sent from heaven into the womb of a Virgin, and who, dwelling within her, was made flesh and was manifested as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin."¹³⁸

This prayer shows that Mary is related to the mystery of the incarnation and points out to the fact that Mary has to be associated to her son in giving thanks to God.

Testimonies from various sources like early liturgical manuals, homiletics, archaeology, hagiography, papyrology, the early Dormition apocrypha witness to a thriving cult of the Virgin in the East Roman Provinces already at the end of the fourth century. In the Western Church the Marian devotion develops a little later than the earliest veneration of certain martyr saints, such as St. Menas in Egypt. The earliest indication of Marian devotion appears to be an intercessory prayer addressed to Virgin Mary preserved on a fragmentary papyrus from late ancient Egypt. The fragment of the papyrus was acquired by the John Rylands Library, Manchester, in 1917 and published in 1938. Although the precise date of the papyrus remains in question, most scholars agreed that it was written in the latter part of the fourth century.¹³⁹ This intercessory prayer in Greek circulated at least a century before the establishment of the feast of Christmas in the 380s. It became familiar to the Westerners in its Latin version, namely the "*Sub tuum praesidium*".¹⁴⁰

*"Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, sancta Dei Genetrix; nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus; sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper Virgo gloriosa et benedicta."*¹⁴¹

The reconstructed text by Father Gabriele Giamberardini, O.F.M. is as follows:

"Under your mercy, we take refuge, Mother of God, do not reject

¹³⁸ *Gratias tibi referimus, Deus, per dilectum puerum tuum Jesum Christum, quem in ultimis temporibus misisti nobis salvatorem et redemptorem et angelum voluntatis tuae; qui est Verbum tuum inseparabile, per quem omnia fecisti et beneplacitum tibi fuit; misisti de coelo in matricem Virginis quique in utero habitus incarnatus est et Filius tibi ostensus est ex Spiritu Sancto et Virgine natus est.* (4, SC 11bis, 31), as cited in: Ibid., Pp.99-100.

¹³⁹ Cf., Shoemaker, Stephen, J., *Marian Liturgies and devotion in early Christianity*, in: Boss, Sarah, Jane (ed.), *Mary: The Complete Resource*, op. cit., Pp. 130-131.

¹⁴⁰ Cf., Roy, Neil, J., *Mary and the Liturgical year*, in: Miravalle, Mark I (ed.), *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, op. cit., P. 635.

¹⁴¹ *Sub Tuum Praesidium*, in: <http://www.tfp.org/resources/prayers/sub-tuum-praesidium.html>, 13.05.13.

our supplications in necessity. But deliver us from danger. (You) alone chaste, alone blessed."¹⁴²

The common tradition of the accepted Latin version is:

*"We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin."*¹⁴³

This prayer shows us the early development of belief in Mary's intercession being expressed in prayer and also a strong mutual influence between prayer and belief. Thus the prayer "*Sub tuum praesidium*" testifies not only the high level of devotion but also highlights the feelings of veneration, trust and love nourished by the ancient Christians towards the Mother of God from the earliest days of Christianity.

Mark Miravalle points out to the underlying fact that by the third century the early Christians already accepted Mary under the title of "Mother of God". But this title was solemnly defined only after two hundred years. The early Church also had realized that direct prayer to Mary did not consist in forms of idolatry or adoration, but rather in a spiritual communication of love and petition to the Mother of Jesus and she continues to care for the Mystical Body of her Son by her intercession. Since the fourth Century, Marian hymns have been sung and churches have been named after her.¹⁴⁴

III.4.2. Marian Devotion in the Patristic Period

At the very outset of the Patristic period we can talk about the "*Missing Mary*". It is very interesting to note the fact that Mary is much less present in the earliest documents as well as in the most solemn documents, than she is in the Gospels. She did not find a place in the preaching of the apostles (kerygma, see Acts 2:14-36, etc.). In the earliest confessions of faith too she is missing and she is not at the centre of the first ecumenical councils. Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 110) is the first one to mention the virginal conception of Jesus as son of Mary, which entered into the confessions of faith at the very beginning of the second century.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Pp. 348ff in "II 'Sub tuum praesidium' e il titolo 'Theotokos' nella tradizione egiziana" in MM, 31 (1969), 324-362, as cited in: O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000, P. 336.

¹⁴³ O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁴ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 45-46.

¹⁴⁵ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., P. 17.

The early Church Fathers showed a continued interest to emphasize Mary's personal virtues by drawing a parallel between Eve and Mary. They articulated the primary theological role of the Blessed Virgin as the "New Eve". Eve's response to the divine command was disobedience, resulting in death. Mary obeyed God and through her obedience to God's will she reversed the disobedience of Eve, becoming the Virgin Mother of God. This theme was first introduced by Justin Martyr (+ circa. 165), which became a favourite topic in patristic teaching.¹⁴⁶

During the fourth century there was a sudden development in popular devotion to Mary. She became the ideal of the consecrated virgin who always stayed at home and prayed. Mark Miravalle puts this in clear terms.

*"The Christian witness of the first centuries of the Church also provides us with examples of direct prayer to Mary as a means of intercession to the graces and the protection of her Son. For St. Irenaeus, Mary is an "Advocate" or interceding helper for Eve and for her salvation. St. Gregory Thaumaturgis (d.350) depicts Mary interceding for those on earth from her position in heaven. St. Ephraem (d.373), the great Eastern doctor and deacon, directly addresses the Blessed Virgin in several Marian Sermons. Direct prayer to Mary is also found in a sermon of the great Eastern Father, St. Gregory Nazianzen (330-389). By the last part of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, we have numerous explicit examples of direct prayer to the Mother of God, for example in the writings of St. Ambrose (d. 397), as well as by St. Epiphanius."*¹⁴⁷

The real impetus for the Marian cult began at the Council of Ephesus in 431, when Mary's unique role as *Theotokos*, the God bearer, was defined. In the period after Ephesus the church gradually took the term *Theotokos* as a form of Marian praise. After the Council of Ephesus, Cathedrals were dedicated to her in the central ecclesial locations of Rome, Jerusalem and Constantinople. The Church experienced an extraordinary flourishing of devotion to the Blessed Virgin both in the East and the West. It was after the Council of Ephesus that the Marian prayers, Marian liturgical feast days, Marian icons, Marian paintings and Marian artwork became wide spread throughout the Christian world.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Cf., Coyle, Kathleen, *Mary in the Christian Tradition: From a Contemporary Perspective*, Gracewing Publishing, 1996, P. 51.

¹⁴⁷ Miravalle, Mark, op. cit., Pp. 44-45.

¹⁴⁸ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 45-46

Marian liturgical feasts, prayer to Mary gave rise in the East to lyrical outpourings. The well-known *Akathistos* hymn, the date of which is uncertain, but which was perhaps the work of Romanus Melodus (+ ca. 555) is one of the best examples.¹⁴⁹

In the sixth century the titles “*Mother of Mercy*” and “*Mater Dolorosa*” were applied to her. The feasts of her annunciation, Dormition and purification were not adopted in the West until the seventh century. By the end of the Patristic Period, Mariology as well as Marian liturgy and Marian poetry had reached a far more advanced stage in the East than in the West. The context for devotion and praise was both doctrinal and liturgical.¹⁵⁰

The Second Vatican Council affirms the fact about the tremendous flourishing of Marian devotion from the early Church onward:

*“Clearly from earliest times the Blessed Virgin is honored under the title of Mother of God, under whose protection the faithful took refuge in all their dangers and necessities. Hence after the Synod of Ephesus the cult of the people of God toward Mary wonderfully increased in veneration and love, in invocation and imitation, according to her own prophetic words: “All generations shall call me blessed, because He that is mighty hath done great things to me”. ”*¹⁵¹

III.4.3. Marian Devotion in the Medieval Church

In the Medieval Church the Marian devotion arose from great delight in what God had done for her, and in what she had done to realize God’s designs in the world in return. The key factor, which played a vital role to this devotion, was the graciousness of Mary’s *fiat* at the annunciation. The handmaid of the Lord of Luke’s Gospel became “Our Lady”, with an important relationship to the person seeking salvation.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., P. 22.

¹⁵⁰ Cf., Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., Pp. 51-52.

¹⁵¹ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 66, in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 08.05.13.

¹⁵² Cf., Id., P. 52.

In the early Middle Ages, Marian theology and Devotion concentrated in the person of Mary, the realities of both heaven and earth. This had an influence in the language and in titles.¹⁵³ Thus Mary is:

*“At one and the same time, virgin and Theotokos, sister and mother, mother and daughter, parent and child of the Savior. The two natures of Christ are reflected in this symbiosis that henceforth was typical of the veneration of Mary.”*¹⁵⁴

Marian piety became an identifying element in the Christian faith of the early Middle Ages. This development can be seen in the Marian feasts, which became increasingly important because:

*“They had an educational function, namely, to form Christians in the virtues and in the life of the Church. The hymns to Mary were an expression of this catechetical intention to shape a devotion that was alert to the aesthetic qualities of the incarnation as represented by the beauty, goodness, and greatness of Mary herself.”*¹⁵⁵

During the eighth and ninth Centuries there was an iconoclast conflict. Mary, in the devotion of the faithful, became the perfect image of beauty and womanhood during this age. This indeed was a great threat to turn faith in Christ into an idolatrous worship of herself. This became one of the factors in the gradual separation of East and West. Strict rules were drawn up with regard to images in the East. But the Western Church remained very liberal in the field of Marian iconography. Thus one can observe that Western piety embraced an abundance of very popular Marian, cultural, and artistic themes, in which aesthetic elements take precedence over content and its meaning. In the eleventh Century, more and more was written about Marian theology and piety, which led to the assertion: “We can never say enough about Mary!” (*De Maria numquam satis*).¹⁵⁶

The twelfth Century is known as the golden age of Mariology. In this century devotion to Mary was widespread. During this period the simple maiden of Nazareth became the great Queen of Heaven who was regarded as the one who transmits the merits of Christ to believers. This idea found expression around the year 1100 in hymns such as *Salve Regina* and *Ave, Regina coelorum*. She was considered

¹⁵³ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., P. 26.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., Pp. 26-27.

¹⁵⁶ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 26-27.

primarily as the mother of the most miserable people on earth and was hailed as the mother of mercy (*mater misericordiae*), our hope, and our advocate. During this golden age it was believed that Mary could obtain not only many graces but she could also obtain even the Holy Spirit through her powerful intercession, for believers. It was in this sense that she was called *mediatrix* or *cooperatrix*. In spite of all these beliefs she was considered strictly subordinate to Christ. Marian Psalter, liturgical hymns and prayers were born in this atmosphere.¹⁵⁷

Devotion to Mary also developed in medieval monasticism and was marked by a combination of courtly love for a lady and mystical love for Our Lady. In the various Monastic Orders and lay fraternities, from Cluny to the Franciscans and from the Knights to the Beguines, an effort was made to link a life of Christian love with Marian devotion in order that mercy might take effective forms. Crowds flocked to attend the monastery festivals connected with the Marian feasts.¹⁵⁸ As a consequence:

*“The enormous veneration towards Mary, which was manifested in the multiplication of prayers, relics, shrines, feasts and narrations of miraculous cures, changed the image of Mary. In the process, Mary was substituted for God as the acting subject of divine deeds and the recipient of divine glory and praise.”*¹⁵⁹

This can be very well noted in a medieval version of the standard prayer, the *Te Deum*¹⁶⁰:

*“We praise thee, O Mother of God; we confess thee, Mary ever Virgin... Thee all angels and archangels, thrones and principalities serve. Thee all powers and virtues in heaven and all dominations obey. Before thee all the angelic choirs, the Cherubim and seraphim, exulting, stand. With unceasing voice every angelic creature proclaims thee: Holy, holy, holy, Mary, Virgin Mother of God.”*¹⁶¹

Some feasts in her honour were preceded by a vigil, others even by a two-week fast. The reformers in all Protestant countries stamped out this exaggerated cult of the Virgin later during the sixteenth Century.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Cf., Ibid., P. 29.

¹⁵⁸ Cf., Ibid., P. 29.

¹⁵⁹ Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., Pp. 53-54.

¹⁶⁰ Cf., Ibid., P. 54.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Cf., Ibid.

The development of scholastic theology during the thirteenth Century allotted little space to Mary. The Immaculate Conception continued to evoke theological discussion and Mary appeared only in the great *Summas*, and in relation to questions about the incarnation.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth Century there was a shift from contemplation to a popular imagination. In the popular imagination, Mary functioned as a merciful and tender mother who cared for her spiritual children. The Focus on the mystery of the incarnation was now replaced by a magical idea of Mary as mother who could solve all problems. The experiences of the Black Death, Hundred Years War, natural disasters and the Great Western Schism lead the people to plead to Mary as Mother of Mercy, for her protection from dangers pressing from every side. The faithful sought consolation in the image of the sorrowing mother at the foot of the Cross. The Franciscans encouraged the faithful to follow the Via Dolorosa, to journey with Mary to the cross. For Christians who could not afford to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, this was a way of sharing in the sufferings of Mary and her Son. Mary's ability to rescue the sinner became the focus of devotion, so that she often functioned independent of God. Popular preaching designated her Queen of Heaven and Refuge of Sinners and placed her at the centre of the process of personal salvation. Devotion to the compassionate Mother of Mercy expressed a need for a religious experience of the feminine in the divine, an experience not available through the understanding of God at the time.¹⁶³

There were lots of abuses prevalent in the Mariology of this late Medieval Period, which naturally had its impact on the Marian devotion. The following comment of Rene Laurentin on the fourteenth Century would make this point clear for us.

*"Repelled by desiccated intellectualism, people sought life on the imaginative and sentimental plane. Throughout this period of decadence popular enthusiasm for the Blessed Virgin never faltered, but the adulterated fodder it was nourished on, consisted of trumpety miracles, ambiguous slogans, and inconsistent maundering."*¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 55-56.

¹⁶⁴ Elizabeth Johnson, "Marian Devotion in the Western Church," *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation, An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad publishing Co., 1986), p. 411, as cited in: Ibid., P. 56.

III.4.4. Mary in the Protestant Reformation

The Reformation during the Sixteenth Century challenged the abuses and distortions of the late Medieval Church as well as the popular cult of Mary. Martin Luther (+1546), Huldrych Zwingli (+1531), and John Calvin (+1564) were the key reformers of this time. On one side they defended a polemical position regarding the Marian devotion but on the other hand, they developed a positive interpretation of the person of Mary. Martin Luther defends the Virginity and even the Perpetual Virginity of Mary. In his view every believer must be a Christ-bearer no less than Mary, but in a spiritual way. He believed that human beings remain sinners, no matter what they do. God only helps us through the merits of Christ. But he could still admit that Mary could pray for us, as we pray for each other. Luther himself showed a tender devotion to the Virgin, especially in his early sermons. In his commentary on the Magnificat he described Mary as a woman of faith and our model of God's grace to the world. At the same time he equated the exaggerations of Catholic devotion to Mary with the Baal worship.¹⁶⁵

Zwingli justifies a devotion that venerates Mary but does not adore her. He preserves many of the external forms of Marian devotion. In his Christological teachings he affirms that the entire mystery of the incarnation is linked to this perpetual virginity. At the same time he rejects a dogmatic interpretation of Motherhood and rejects the function of Mary as *Mediatrix*. According to him Marian piety should lead the Church back to its caritative and social tasks.¹⁶⁶

Calvin emphasises the historical dimension of Mary and the traditional teaching on her Virginity. He says Mary is a virgin before, during and after childbirth. His emphasis is not on the miraculous aspect of her virginity but on the action of the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, Mary is an ethical model. She is a model of listening, understanding and witnessing. The emphasis is on the manifestation of the virtues exemplified by Mary and on the building up of the Church by these virtues.¹⁶⁷

The reformers were not completely against Mary. They only rejected her veneration on Christological grounds. According to them praying to Mary and asking for favours detracted from Christ as the sole mediator between God and human

¹⁶⁵ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice/, op. cit., Pp. 30-33, ; Cf., Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., P. 57.

¹⁶⁶ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice/, op. cit., Pp. 33-34.

¹⁶⁷ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 34-35.

beings. The criticism of the Marian cult by the Protestants only increased the Catholic enthusiasm for it. This enthusiasm led the Catholics to multiply their efforts to preserve her exalted Status.¹⁶⁸

III.4.5. Marian Devotion in the Seventeenth Century

Leo Scheffczyk explains the characteristic feature of this century as follows:

*“The medieval praise of Mary lost some of its authenticity and profoundness in the homiletic and poetic testimonies of the late Middle Ages. Nevertheless it remained an inexhaustible reservoir also for the modern era from which the more apologetic orientated devotees of Our Lady, for example Petrus Canisius (+1597), as well as glowing admirers as Lawrence of Brindisi (+1619) who in his “Mariale” exaggerated the comparison between Christ and Mary. A certain mystical internalization of Marian veneration with concentration of attention on the inner life of Jesus and his mother produced the French school in the 17th Century, in which Marian devotion and love for Christ were intimately linked.”*¹⁶⁹

Pierre de Bérulle (+1629), Jean-Jacques Olier (+1657), and John Eudes (+1680) from the French School contributed a lot through their works for the growth of Marian Spirituality, which was passed almost unchallenged down to the Twentieth Century.¹⁷⁰

In the pastoral care of pilgrimages Marian theology and piety played an important role. As a result new churches and chapels were built in Marian places like Einsiedeln, Altötting and dedicated to Mary. The inter-confessional struggle during the Thirty Years War (1618-48) led to the suffocation in the Christian consciousness and as a result believers were called upon to consecrate themselves wholly to Mary. The practice of enslaving oneself to Mary as a sign of a total commitment to her service found a favourable soil throughout Europe and exerted a considerable influence there. Marian devotion provided the soil for numerous religious practices that were supported by a flowering of Mariological writings and produced growths over which little theological control was exercised. As a result, there were internal reactions against the exaggerations and deviations. During this century Jansenism became famous in France. At the time when the Jansenist quarrel was most intense voices were raised against the excessive devotional praises and practices towards Mary. These tensions led to a real Marian crisis. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort

¹⁶⁸ Cf., Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., Pp. 57-58.

¹⁶⁹ Scheffczyk, Leo, op. cit., P. 232, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

¹⁷⁰ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., P. 36.

(d. 1716) sought to resolve this crisis by taking into account the criticisms coming from the Protestants, from the Jansenists and from the authoritative theologians.¹⁷¹

*“De Montfort has been called the master par excellence of Marian devotion. His best known work is *The True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. He believed that it was more perfect not to approach God directly, but to go more humbly through a mediator. (...) He therefore demanded a complete inferior surrender to her so as to be entirely formed by her.”¹⁷²*

He notes that a true Marian devotion must be:

*“(a) **interior**, more in the heart than in practices; (b) **steadfast**, based on faith and not fluctuating with moods and feelings; (c) **disinterested**, more intent on God than the graces to be obtained...; (d) **oriented toward Christ**, in whom we are “brought to the Father”; and (e) **confident and heartfelt**, since in us the spiritual itself is fleshly, i.e. communicates through flesh.”¹⁷³*

Such devotional teaching and practices were often very debatable. Confraternities of the “slaves of Mary” bound themselves in spiritual slavery to Mary, wearing small chains about their necks or wrists as a sign of their bondage.¹⁷⁴ Even though this form of devotion has found criticism because of the exclusiveness with which its author defends it, it contributed the essential elements in the new start of Marian devotion after the era of Enlightenment.¹⁷⁵

III.4.6. Marian Devotion in the Eighteenth Century

In the Eighteenth Century Marian theology confronted with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, a philosophical movement that rejected extrinsic authority in favour of the only authority of reason. This movement posed a serious crisis for Christianity. Marian theologians like *Alphonsus Maria de Liguori* (+1787) the founder of the Redemptorists, sought to maintain only what was essential. This can be very clearly seen in his writings on: *Defense of the Glories of Mary* (1750) and in his *Dogmatic Treatise against the so-called Reformers* (1769). But rationalism caused a clear moderating of Marian theology and even of Marian piety. As a result some bishops had images removed and reduced the number of Marian shrines. Marian feasts were struck from local Church calendars, shrines fell into ruin, and

¹⁷¹ Cf., *Ibid.*, Pp. 36-39.

¹⁷² Coyle, Kathleen, *op. cit.*, P. 59.

¹⁷³ Tostain, A., “Devotion” in: *Dictionary of Mary*, *op. cit.*, P. 117.

¹⁷⁴ Cf., *Id.*

¹⁷⁵ Cf., Scheffczyk, Leo, *op. cit.*, P. 233.

excessive devotions were discouraged. During the French Revolution the statue of the goddess of reason was enthroned in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The Jesuits, promoters of the Marian cult, were disbanded in 1773. In spite of this tough time popular devotion was catered for by Sermons and by pamphlets, which were given out by congregations particularly devoted to Mary.¹⁷⁶

III.4.7. Marian Devotion from Nineteenth Century to Vatican II

The Nineteenth Century marked the dawn of a new “Marian Era.” The period of Enlightenment came to an end and the period of the Catholic Restoration brought a new flowering of Marian piety. Pilgrimages were revived. Apparitions of Mary were recorded all over Europe during the middle of this Century, especially in France: Paris in 1830, Rome in 1842, La Salette in 1846, Lourdes in 1858, Normandy in 1871, Knock, Ireland, in 1879. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was solemnly proclaimed by Pius IX by the middle of the Century (1854). This long debated and often challenged definition of the Immaculate Conception emerged as one of the high points of this development. The appearance of the Virgin in 1830 to Catherine Labouré (d. 1876), a Daughter of Charity in Paris, together with the “miraculous medal” that came with the Virgin and carried the inscription “*O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you,*” played a role in this establishment of dogma. The new dogma was well received in the Catholic world and its proclamation served to give Roman Catholicism a more united front. Mary became more and more an autonomous figure both in popular preaching and in theological discussion. There was an exaggerated emphasis given to our dependence on her and Mary’s own dependence on Christ was paid little attention. Certain interpretations of the devotion promulgated by Louis Grignion de Montfort especially the emphasis on praying “*To Jesus through Mary*” became popular once more with the revival of Marian spirituality.¹⁷⁷

The devotion to Mary expressed itself in many ways. A growing number of congregations were dedicated to her; for example the Society of Missionaries of Mary, which was founded by Grignion de Montfort, was finally approved in 1853. The Little Companions of Mary was founded at Nottingham in England in 1877. The public veneration of the Heart of Mary which was promoted by St. Jean Eudes, was

¹⁷⁶ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., Pp. 41-42, ; Cf., Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., Pp. 59-60.

¹⁷⁷ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 42-43, ; Cf., Ibid., P. 60.

recognized 1804 and received a new Mass formulas and Offices. May devotions, which had become popular in Italy in the Eighteenth Century, began to spread throughout the whole Church. Lourdes became very famous for its miracles and became a very popular place for pilgrimage. In 1878, Leo XIII succeeded Pius IX and his Marian doctrine is expressed particularly in his encyclicals on the Rosary¹⁷⁸. The devotion of reciting the Rosary was recommended very strongly by him during the time when the Church and especially the Pope were so violently attacked. It is firm belief of the Pope that no grace comes to us except through Mary, which he affirms in his encyclical *Octobri Mense*.¹⁷⁹

From the beginning of Twentieth Century until the Second Vatican Council Marian devotion continued to develop with great enthusiasm. St. Pius X (Pope 1903-14) the successor of Pope Leo, celebrated the half-Centenary of the definition of the Immaculate Conception by publishing another Marian encyclical, *Ad diem illium* in 1904. In this encyclical he explains about the role of Mary in the work of restoring all things in Christ.¹⁸⁰

There was a constant competition between piety and dogmatic reflection. In Western Europe between 1930 and 1950 alone thirty series of apparitions were investigated of which only three apparitions have been approved by the ecclesial authority in 1965 namely, apparitions at Fatima in Portugal in 1917, at Beauraing in Belgium, in 1932 and at Banneux in Belgium in 1933 and the most famous apparition was the apparition in Fatima.¹⁸¹

Pilgrimages to Marian shrines, local or national, increased day by day and were very crowded. Many congregations and associations placed themselves under the patronage of Mary e.g., the “*Militia Immaculatae*”, founded by the polish Franciscan martyr Maximillian Kolbe in 1917, the “*Legion of Mary*”, founded by Frank Duff, an Irish lay man in Dublin in 1921 and the “*Blue Army*”, founded by

¹⁷⁸ The encyclicals on the Rosary are: *Adiutricem* (On the Rosary) September 5, 1895; *Fidentem Piumque Animum* (On the Rosary) September 20, 1896; *Augustissimae Virginis Mariae* (On the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary) September 12, 1897; *Diuturni Temporis* (On the Rosary) September 5, 1898; *Iucunda Semper Expectatione* (On the Rosary) September 8, 1894; *Laetitiae Sanctae* (Commending Devotion to the Rosary) September 8, 1893; *Magnae Dei Matris* (On the Rosary) September 8, 1892; *Octobri Mense* (On the Rosary) September 22, 1891; *Superiore Anno* (On the Recitation of the Rosary) August 30, 1884; *Supremi Apostolatus Officio* (On Devotion to the Rosary) September 1, 1883; *Vi E Ben Noto* (On the Rosary and Public Life) September 20, 1887.

¹⁷⁹ Cf., Graef Hilda, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, Christian Classics, 2009, Pp. 378-379.

¹⁸⁰ Cf., *Ibid.*, Pp. 379-380.

¹⁸¹ Cf., *Ibid.*, Pp. 385-386.

Rev. Fr. Harold V. Colgan, parish priest of St. Mary of Plainfield, New Jersey in 1947. The German Schönstatt Movement was recognized as a Secular Institute in 1948. The movement had its simple beginnings in 1914 and was not militant in character. The cradle of this movement is a small chapel in Vallendar, in Germany, which was destined to become a place of pilgrimage. Mary is honoured here under the title, *Mater ter admirabilis*.¹⁸² The members of Schönstatt Movement enter into a covenant with her, which is called the “*covenant of love*”, through which they surrender themselves to her unconditionally and live in complete dependence on her. Through this *covenant of love* the individual not only exchanges hearts and gifts with her but also sanctifies himself by bringing “*Capital of grace*” to her. (This spirituality of Covenant of love will be dealt exclusively in the final later in a separate chapter).

New Marian feasts were established. National and international Marian congresses got multiplied in which popular manifestations and spiritual conferences were combined. These were often the occasion for the expressions of wishes for the progress of Marian teaching: for dogmatic definitions of the Assumption, of Mary’s universal mediation, of her co-redemptive role, and for the establishment of new feasts. Societies of Marian studies were founded since 1935 for the purpose of glorifying Mary and gaining a deeper understanding of her mystery. The Marian movement reached its high point under Pius XII. In 1942, during the Second World War, the Pope consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1950, the promulgation of the Dogma of the Assumption on November 1st marked another jewel in Mary’s crown.¹⁸³

The long history of Marian devotion nourished the popular religious imagination of the people through the centuries. This is well described by Kathleen Coyle who says:

“These manifestations of Mary tell us a lot about our own needs. They often tell us more about the Church in any particular situation in history than about Mary herself. Mary has been shaped largely by the imaginations of many generations of Christians and has adapted herself to the religious needs of the faithful in various times and places. The Church has constantly turned to her to meet the ever-changing aspects of Christian discipleship. She has been

¹⁸² Cf., Ibid., P. 398.

¹⁸³ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., P. 44, ; Cf., Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., P. 61.

its model in re-embodying in particular times, places, and cultures the love and justice of God. Because times and cultures vary, the challenge of Christian discipleship and the demands of radical living of the Gospel also vary and can never be rigidly prescribed. Every age, therefore, unconsciously forms its image of Mary according to its own ideal."¹⁸⁴

Therefore it was the task of the Second Vatican Council to place Marian devotion within the limits of sound theology and practice.

The *Second Vatican Council* moved from a Mariology that was cut off from the rest of theology, to a teaching on Mary that was integrated with theology in its entirety. Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, under the title "*Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church*" became the last chapter of the Constitution on the Church. It is considered as the *Magna Charta of Mariology*.

"The document deals not in biblical exegesis properly so called but in a biblical theology that relies on a body of scripture that is carefully limited to indisputable texts. The document also draws on the teaching of the Church fathers and takes over the content of established dogmas. In her role in the incarnation and in redemption Mary is described as an "associate" and as a humble servant whom the grace of God has allowed to "cooperate" in salvation by her obedience, her pilgrimage of faith, her hope, and her love, from her fiat at the Annunciation to the "consent" she gave to the Cross. Finally, the text emphasizes the connection of Mary with the Church, of which she is a figure (type) and the most outstanding member and in which she has a maternal role."¹⁸⁵

The document placed Mary within the wider framework of the whole economy of salvation. Throughout the document there is an emphasis both on Mary's motherhood and on her continuous response to God's call throughout her life. Mary was placed in an auxiliary relationship to Christ in order to diminish the Marian excesses or the "Marian Inflation" of the preconciliar period. The council was also careful to place her mediation within the framework of Christ and the Church. The Council highlights that Mary's role, as our mother does not diminish Christ's unique mediation:

"For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all

¹⁸⁴ Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., Pp. 62-63.

¹⁸⁵ Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., Pp. 45-46.

its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ."¹⁸⁶

The Council recalls the unceasing active role of the Mother on our behalf:

*"This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and cultics, until they are led into the happiness of their true home."*¹⁸⁷

The dominant theme of this document is Mary as model of the Church but it is interesting to note that she is never addressed as "Mother of the Church".

III.4.8. Marian Devotion since Vatican II

The Council was followed by a period of relative silence about Mary in the beginning. This raises the questions: What did Vatican II contribute to the understanding of Mary and how did Marian devotion develop after Vatican II? To have an answer to this question I would like to present here the interview with Fr. Phalan,¹⁸⁸ which was conducted by Zenit during the 23rd International Marian Mariological Congress, which was organized by the International Pontifical Marian Academy in September 2012.

Father Phalan spoke with ZENIT about Vatican II and Marian devotion in the post-conciliar years.

"ZENIT: What did Vatican II contribute to the understanding of Mary?

Father Phalan: Vatican II said nothing novel about Mary. What's important to realize in Vatican II is its methodology for the renewal of the Church. John XXIII wanted to have this "aggiornamento", this renewal of the Church, through a return to our sources, through a return to Scripture, through a return to the tradition of the Church (particularly the Fathers of the Church), and to the

¹⁸⁶ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 60, in: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 18.05.13.

¹⁸⁷ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 62, Loc. cit.

¹⁸⁸ Father Phalan is a member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross where he serves as director of Family Rosary International, continuing the work of Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton. He contributed to two workshops that explored post-Vatican II Mariology. He is also the president of the Mariology Society of America.

liturgical tradition of the Church, to then be able to respond to the needs of the Church in the modern world as we see in Gaudium et Spes. That same methodology was applied to our reflection on the Blessed Virgin Mary. That did require a bit of a shift because that wasn't really the exact methodology that had been used regarding our reflection on the Blessed Virgin Mary for several hundred years before the Council.

ZENIT: Perhaps there was a time of "silence" about Mary after Vatican II. How has Marian devotion developed in this post-conciliar period?

Father Phalan: It's true; for those of us who lived through the years after the Second Vatican Council, there was a collapse of Marian reflection in the Church for a variety of reasons. (...) In brief, the implementation of Vatican II collided with the very disjointed intense social change that was happening in the late 1960s. There was this collapse in reflection and devotion, particularly in developed countries, less so in the developing world. (...) Speaking about the "developed" world, there was a marked decline in Marian devotion, and this still is the case. Marian devotion is not at all, what it was 60 years ago in the Catholic Church in the United States, Canada and Europe. But we can see the signs of new growth. There is lots of rebirth in interest in the rosary. There's lots of desire to understand who Mary is. There are a lot of new movements within the Church that are rediscovering the importance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, prayer of the rosary, and her place in family prayer especially.

There is still a long ways to go. A part of it is that there is not a whole lot of preaching about Mary that people hear in their local parishes. There needs to be a deepening of Mariological reflection embraced by the whole Church, and particularly by the clergy. In many seminaries, the clergy hasn't studied much about the Blessed Virgin Mary. Hopefully an event like this -- this International Mariological Congress, and through other events -- there will be a lot of promotion of Marian devotion through the Year of Faith. Hopefully those will be moments that will help people again to rediscover who Mary is in the Church.¹⁸⁹

The interview with Fr. Phalan helps us to get a good glance about the development of the Marian devotion after Vatican II. At this point of our discussion let us take a look at the contributions of the Popes in the post-conciliar period.

Pope Paul VI published two documents on the Virgin Mary that were in the line set by Vatican II, namely, the encyclical *Signum Magnum* (The Great Sign - On

¹⁸⁹ Schneible, Ann, *Marian Devotion in a Post Vatican II Era*: Mariology Society of America President Reflects on Rosary and Our Lady's Comeback, September 06, 2012, in: <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/marian-devotion-in-a-post-vatican-ii-era>, 20.05.13.

Devotion to the Most Blessed Mary) on May 13, 1967 and the Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (The Right Ordering and Developing Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary) on February 2, 1974. The second of them can be regarded as a “directory” of Marian devotion as outlined by Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*.¹⁹⁰ This document emphasized that there is but one Christian worship of which Marian devotion forms a most noble part. It stresses that devotion to Mary must find “*its origin and effectiveness from Christ, find its complete expression in Christ and lead through Christ in the Spirit to the Father.*”¹⁹¹ It also insists that all devotion expressed towards Mary is ultimately given to Christ: “*What is given to the handmaid is referred to the Lord.*”¹⁹² The document states that the devotion to Mary:

*“Must be rooted in the great themes of salvation history; it should be shaped by the feasts of the liturgical year; be ecumenically sensitive, especially to the centrality of Christ; and be tuned to the historical and cultural situations of time and place.”*¹⁹³

The document provides guidance for the development and renewal of Marian devotion by highlighting the Trinitarian, Christological and Ecclesial aspect of Marian devotion. It also proposes biblical, liturgical, ecumenical and anthropological guidelines.¹⁹⁴

The encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* was written in 1987 by Pope John Paul II and published on the feast of the Annunciation to initiate the Marian Year. The encyclical emphasizes “*the special presence of the Mother of God, in the mystery of Christ and of the Church.*”¹⁹⁵

John Paul II made a significant contribution to Vatican II’s teaching on Mary’s mediation, her intercession and her motherhood. He says:

“Mary’s mediation is unique because it was intimately united to her motherhood: it has a specific maternal character that distinguishes it from other forms of mediation. Her motherhood was one of “complete openness to the person of Christ, to his work,

¹⁹⁰ Cf., Blancy, Alain/Jourjon, Maurice, op. cit., P. 46.

¹⁹¹ Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, Introduction, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19740202_marialis-cultus_en.html, 20.05.13.

¹⁹² Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, No. 25, Loc. cit.

¹⁹³ Coyle, Kathleen, op. cit., P. 74.

¹⁹⁴ Cf., Thompson, Thomas, A., *Vatican II and Beyond*, in: Graef, Hilda, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, Christian Classics, 2009, P. 418.

¹⁹⁵ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 48, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 20.05.13.

to his whole mission” (RM 39). After the Assumption, Mary’s mediation continues in the Church as maternal mediation - interceding for all her children, cooperating in the saving action of her Son-Redeemer - for the spiritual rebirth of all humanity (RM 40).”¹⁹⁶

“Through the act of entrustment, Mary’s motherhood becomes part of the life of the disciple. As Christ on the cross entrusted his mother to the apostle John who received and took her “into his own home” (Jn 19:27), so the disciple receives from Christ Mary as Mother. “The maternity of Mary ... is a gift that Christ makes to each man personally” (RM 45). This entrustment that begins with Christ and the reception of Mary into one’s life is ultimately directed to Christ.”¹⁹⁷

It is very interesting to know that the Pope by making a reference to St. Louis Grignion de Montfort’s authentic Marian spirituality highlighted in this document that an act of consecration or entrustment to Virgin Mary plays an important part in our devotion to Mary.

Pope Benedict XVI’s expression of Marian devotion differs from that of his predecessor, John Paul II. The following are some of his remarkable statements concerning the importance of Mary for the completion and for the equilibrium of the faith.¹⁹⁸

1) “Mary is identified with the Daughter Israel and also with the Church - who is mother, spouse, and virgin. Mary represents humanity open to the revelation of God. As Daughter Zion and also mother of the Messiah, she binds together the people of the two testaments, New and Old.”¹⁹⁹

2) “In Mary, the Church finds its own identity as a person - that of a mother. Because of this, the Church can never be reduced to a sociological body or to a legal entity. Mariology can never be dissolved into impersonal ecclesiology. Mary is a type of shield against a masculinised model of the Church. Mariology deepens and clarifies the nature of the Church, which consists of more than structure and action. It is the Christ united with his spouse, the Church. Mary as a type of the Church cannot be absorbed or assimilated. Mary assures that there be an affective, personal presence as the reality of the Church.”²⁰⁰

3) “A correct Marian devotion requires that faith be accompanied not only by reason but also by “the reasons of the heart”. The head

¹⁹⁶ Thompson, Thomas, A., op. cit., P. 421.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., Pp. 421-422.

¹⁹⁸ Cf., P. 423.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., P. 423.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., P. 424.

must reflect with lucidity, but the heart must be able to feel warmth: faith assures the full human dimension.”²⁰¹

Thus from the contributions of the Popes we can see that the Virgin Mary has occupied the highest place in the Church and in the heart of the believers after Christ. Father Salvatore Perrella in his address during the 23rd International Marian Mariological Congress in September 2012 summarizes beautifully how the contributions during the pontificates of Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and the Church’s study of Mary during the Second Vatican Council contributed to the understanding of Mary and the devotion towards her in the following words:

“The years of the pontificates of Paul VI, of John Paul II and now of Benedict XVI, and, in a particular way, in guiding the doctrine of chapter 8 of Lumen Gentium, the Church with her teaching and theology have “re-motivated and renewed Mariology in a convincing way.”

*“Chapter 8 of Lumen Gentium has integrated Mary of Nazareth in the mystery of the Trinitarian God of Christ beginning with the Word of faith taking into due account the living tradition of the Church, being careful to propose a doctrine that does not make dissension grow but inspires consensus and fraternal dialogue, in charity and truth, between the Church, Churches and the Christian confessions.”*²⁰²

Devotion to Mary seems to be almost instinctive for a Christian. As we journeyed through the historical milestones of Marian devotion in the Church, we cannot oversee one important fact, namely, that the practice of consecration to Mary or consecrating oneself to God through Mary was widely spread since the Seventeenth Century. In fact this devotion became very popular in the Twentieth Century. In the second half of this chapter let us examine how this devotion of Consecration to Mary emerged and developed in the Church over the Centuries.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Gaspari, Antonio, *3 Popes Who Have Loved Our Lady: Father Salvatore Perrella on the Mariology of Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI*, September 11, 2012, in: <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/3-popes-who-have-loved-our-lady>. 20.05.13.

III.5. Mary and Devotion of Consecration: A Historical Analysis

Down through the Centuries in the Christian tradition we can find that there was a quest for leading a consecrated life. The life of martyrdom was desired right from the first Century onwards by many saints, because it was seen as the ideal life of sanctity. For example, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Yvonne-Aimée de Malestroit are some of the saints who ardently desired the life of Martyrdom. The early believers considered such martyrs not only as saints but also they considered them as objects of religious devotion. A little later ascetic life was recognized as life of sanctity. The first among them who lead an ascetic life were the virgins who renounced marriage along with its human joys in order to give themselves to Christ out of pure love. The inspiration to lead such a life was drawn from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 11:2, which says “*I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband.*” Thus the life of consecrated virgins was seen as life of dedication, devotion and marriage. These consecrated virgins were seen as Virgin dedicated to God (*Virgo Deo dicata*), Virgin consecrated to God (*Virgo Deo devota*), spouse of Christ (*sponsa Christi*) and as Virgin married to Christ (*Virgo Christo maritata*).²⁰³

Until the Fourth Century the word *consecration* was not used. St. Jerome was the first one to use this word to refer to women who were consecrated virgins. In the beginning the consecrated virgins lived together with their families or together with the rest of the world. Later a life of physical separation emerged which indeed gave birth to hermits and monastic communities. The consecrated virgins set themselves apart in order to live the ascetic life more completely.²⁰⁴

The life of Monasticism, which began in the Fourth Century in its communitarian form, was not characterized as *consecration*. There were no any kind of religious vows too. The life of sanctity in the monastic life was based on the desire to flee from the world in order to approach God directly by leading an ascetic life based on fasting, celibacy and solitude. It was a search for a perfect life by

²⁰³ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 38-39.

²⁰⁴ Cf., Boss, Sarah, Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, in: Boss, Sarah Jane (ed.), op. cit., P. 414.

renouncing the world. The vows of poverty, obedience and chastity were codified and systematized around the end of the Twelfth Century. This resulted in rapid foundations of religious orders, where monks and nuns lived a life of separation from the world in an enclosure. Thus the consecrated life came to be known as the cloistered life.²⁰⁵

During the latter Middle Ages the consecrated religious life was extended to the members of the Secular Institutions, who were living actively in the world. As a result the Preaching Friars, the Third Order secular people, lay people who lived in religious communities, various religious societies of the Sixteenth Centuries like the Society of Jesus turned out to be associations of consecrated men and women, who by their manner of life lived a life set apart from the world through their inner disposition, although they worked in the world. The lay associations in which the members devoted themselves to prayer and almsgiving flourished during the Medieval Period²⁰⁶

Confraternities, which had a broader territorial base replaced the lay associations during the Tridentine Period. Though they did not require members to commit every aspect of their lives to the service of its aims and ideals, still some aspects of their organization formed the basis for the later organizations of lay people where the members were formally consecrated. Since 1563 we see a new development living a life of sanctity, namely consecrating oneself to the Blessed Virgin. In the Sodality of the Holy Virgin, which was set up by the newly established Society of Jesus, the members had to offer themselves to Mary in order to achieve a consecration to God. Marian Sodalities and the practice of consecration to Mary increased rapidly during the Seventeenth Century. At this juncture it is necessary to understand the motives behind the notion of asking Mary for assistance in attaining consecration to God.²⁰⁷ Why was Mary brought into play during this period in leading one's consecrated life to God? What are the reasons, which made the people of this age to take a strong recourse to Mary?

The explanation given by Leo Scheffczyk helps to get an answer for the above questions. He says:

²⁰⁵ Cf., Id., Pp. 41-43.

²⁰⁶ Cf., Id.

²⁰⁷ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 414-415.

“The history of Marian devotion and the Marian cult in the Church has produced other, more intensive forms of devotions, which reinforce the element of “imitation”. This imitation is part of every cult, where one tries to imitate the beloved person in attitude and lifestyle. Mary as the first redeemed, as the perfect Christian, as the personal archetype of total surrender to Christ is a striking example to impress a person, who seeks salvation, in a deeper and more powerful way than the example of any other saint. It was in this way that a richer unfolding of Marian forms of devotion came about and very a personal attachment and commitment to Mary developed, which were not only practiced by individuals, but were also taken over by whole communities like the Marian Confraternities of the end of the Middle Ages, the Marian Congregations of newer times; the pilgrimages to pictures of Mary and to Marian shrines, especially in the time of Counter Reformation, with the aim of self-sanctification, but also of apostolic mission in the spirit and attitude of Mary.”²⁰⁸

Since the Middle Ages efforts to realize the interior spiritualization of the consecration, which is inherent in the sacrament of baptism have been seriously undertaken due to human weakness and pastoral negligence, which led the Christian people to a spiritual darkness. They were becoming ignorant, indifferent and were even taking recourse to superstition, which resulted in spiritual degradation. From the Thirteenth Century onwards, theology became an abstract university discipline and a monopoly of a new class of secular clerics. These learned Clerics employed a technical and specialized language in their preaching and teaching, which was not understood by the common people. As a result it led to the suffocation of the faith of the people. The liturgy started unfolding in Latin during the same time. It was no more celebrated in the language of the people and hence they found it very difficult to understand it. Even some particular liturgical forms were really too subtle for easy comprehension by the people. Such development led to a widening the gap between the people and the Church. People participated in the liturgical celebrations with a sense of inner detachment, because the liturgy lost all its natural vitality, which once gave lot of meaning to them. As a compensation for such deficiencies the pastors introduced elements like stories of miracles and apparitions, compensatory devotions, pious societies and brotherhoods as well as pilgrimages and various paraliturgical functions. Spiritual lethargy was on the rise and in order to keep the faith and religion alive some of the popular devotions cultivated the practice of giving oneself totally to God, opening oneself thereby to all the inspirations of the

²⁰⁸ Cf., Scheffczyk, Leo, op. cit., P. 251, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

Holy Spirit. Such popular devotions were practiced not only by laypeople but even also by some monks or nuns. By means of the offerings and consecrations they cultivated a way of life, which manifested in abandonment of oneself to the divine will to attain spiritual perfection.²⁰⁹

It was during this period of spiritual lethargy, which was ruling the Church, a great movement of confidence, trust, and love in the Mother of God began to develop. Mary played a role of the greatest prominence during this period. She seemed to be closer to the people than the God of the scholastics. People started considering her as a remedy to beat out the spiritual lethargies. As a result the desire on the part of the faithful to entrust themselves to her began to increase and people started to make acts of consecration to her. By turning towards her people started turning towards God. This discovery of the role of Mary and the attitude of placing one's total confidence in Mary from the part of the faithful, led to the birth of many Consecration Movements which were blazing new spiritual paths into the later centuries especially after the Renaissance. Thus one can understand that Mary always played a central and indispensable role in the life of the faithful.²¹⁰

The attitude of relying on Mary's protection and help to obtain graces and the devotion of placing oneself in the hands of Mary with total confidence in her, as a gift of oneself to her did not begin during the Middle Ages rather it began to take hold from the Seventh Century onwards. It was a practice, which was deeply rooted already in the ancient Church. Now for a complete understanding of this devotion of consecration to Mary let us investigate the expression of this devotion in the life of the church throughout the centuries.

III.5.1. Marian Consecration in the Patristic Period

The most ancient recorded filial prayer of early Christians (third- or, at the latest, Fourth-Century prayer) to the Mother of God, the *Sub tuum praesidium* can be said as the first indication of the tradition which would come to be known as Marian consecration in the Church. This prayer, which was reconstructed by Father Gabriele Giamberardini²¹¹, O.F.M. (+1978) "*is the filial prayer of Christians who know Mary's motherly mercy ... and therefore do not hesitate to have recourse to her*

²⁰⁹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 44-46.

²¹⁰ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 46-47.

²¹¹ The Franciscan Father Gabriele Giamberardini (+1978) may be considered as a pioneer in Coptic Christian studies.

protection”²¹² We have already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter that this prayer testifies the high level of devotion and also highlights the feelings of veneration, trust and love nourished by the ancient Christians towards Mary.

Father Quéméneur makes the following observation regarding the most ancient prayer *Sub tuum praesidium*. He says:

*“Here we do not yet have a consecration properly so called, but we already discern the fundamental elements that characterize Marian consecrations. The Sub tuum recognizes the patronage of the Mother of God; it is a spontaneous gesture of recourse to Mary. Originating in Egypt, the Sub tuum, with slight variations, will soon be taken up by the other Churches; starting with the Sixth Century, it is inserted into the Byzantine, Ambrosian, and Roman liturgies. We can say that it is the root from which the formulas of other Marian prayers will arise.”*²¹³

The prayer *Sub tuum praesidium* testifies to the Christian’s childlike tendency to take refuge under the protection of Mary. This is very clear in the entrustment act of the Emperor Heraclius. According to Saint Germanus of Constantinople the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius entrusted the city on the Bosphorus to God and the Virgin Mother in 626. As the city was in danger the Emperor made this act of entrustment and it was spared. Father Joseph de Sainte-Marie, O.C.D., (a professor of Theology at the Roman Teresianum.) sees this entrustment act as the first known collective Marian consecration in history.²¹⁴

An early Patristic understanding of the ‘*gift of self*’ to the Mother of Jesus was seen in the form of referring to oneself as ‘*Servus Mariae*’ which means ‘*servant*’ or a ‘*slave*’ to the Mother of God. Evidences for the title ‘*Servus Mariae*’ were found in African Sermons from the Fifth and Sixth Centuries, which indicate a personal attitude of belonging to Mary. This term was also used by Saint Ephrem, the Syrian (+ 373) and by Pope John VII (+ 707), but their usage did not enjoy the same fervor of Saint Ildephonsus of Toledo (+ 667). He is considered as the major

²¹² Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus: John Paul II’s Program of Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, Academy of the Immaculate, 1992, Pp. 41-42.

²¹³ M. Quemeneur, S.M.M., “Towards a History of Marian Consecration”, trans. Br. William Fackovec, S.M., *Marian Library Studies* 122 (March 1966): 4. (This excellent article originally appeared as “La consecration de soi à la Vierge à travers l’histoire”, *Cahiers Marials*, no. 14 [1959]: 119-28), as cited in: *Ibid.*, P. 43.

²¹⁴ Cf., *Ibid.*, P. 45.

representative of the spirituality of ‘*Marian slavery*’ in the Western Church, which eventually develops into what is now known as Marian consecration.²¹⁵

- **Ildephonsus of Toledo (+ 667)**

Ildephonsus joined the Benedictine monastery and later became abbot of the monastery of Agli. He became the archbishop of Toledo in 657. He was the author of well-known treatise on the virginity of Mary, namely, *Libellus de virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae contra tres infideles*. This won him the title “*The Virgin’s Chaplain*”. His own faith in the mystery of Mary’s divine and virginal motherhood is mentioned in the chapter XII of his treatise. The text is filled with repeated praises of Mary along with his invocation to her for various graces. In this context he pronounces a genuine act of self-giving or consecration to the Blessed Virgin, where he expresses his will to become the slave of the Blessed Mother. He also expresses that, in order to serve her Son in a better manner, he wanted to live under her patronage and to live according to her commands.²¹⁶ The following extract from his consecration prayer will help us to understand the notion of Slave of Mary in a precise form.

“Now I come to you alone, Virgin Mother of God. I bow down before you, sole work of the Incarnation of my God [opus incarnationis Dei mei]. I humble myself before you, who alone became the Mother of my Saviour. . . . I ask you to reveal to me the superabundant sweetness of your Son. . . . Grant that I may adhere to God and to you, serve [famulari] your Son and yourself, my Lord and you. . . .

I deliver myself up to him as to the Lord of powers; to you, as to the servant of the Lord of all: to him, as to God, to you as the Mother of God; to him, as my Redeemer, to you as to the work of my Redemption [opera Redemptionis meae]. For the work that he did for my Redemption was originally formed in the truth of your person. He who became my Redeemer was your Son. . . . It is for this reason that I am your slave, because your Son is my Master [Dominus]. You are my Mistress or Lady [Domina] because you are the servant [ancilla] of my Lord. Thus I am the slave of the servant of my Lord, because you have become my Lady [Domina], as the Mother of your own Master [Domini tui]. This is why I became your slave, because you are the Mother of the One who made me [factoris mei]. . . .

²¹⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 45-46.

²¹⁶ Cf., Gambero, Luigi, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of Medieval Latin Theologians*, translated by: Thomas Buffer, Ignatius Press, 2005, Pp. 27, 31.

O very noble title of liberty . . . if only I could desire to be the slave of the Mother of my Master; if only I could merit to be the slave of the servant of the One who made me. . . . O that I might be devotedly tied to your service [in servitutis devotione ligari] . . . that I might love in your Mother what you accomplished in me with your love; that I might serve your Mother in order that you might test whether I have served you too thereby [me probes servisse tibi]; that she might dominate me so that I might know that I have pleased you. And that her domination might be operative over me in this world so that you might be my Lord for all eternity."²¹⁷

Ildefonsus, while expressing himself as *Slave of Mary*, did not use the word to consecrate in his prayer. He rather used the expressions like *to give oneself* or *to deliver oneself*. But one cannot deny the fact that his expressions in the above mentioned prayer was a total gift, a service, a radical servitude or slavery.²¹⁸ The next major witness to the development of the tradition is the great Doctor of the Church, Saint John of Damascus.

- **St. John of Damascus (+ ca. 750)**

He is considered as the last but one of the most outstanding Fathers of the Greek Church. He was born in Damascus to a noble Christian Family of Arab origin around 650. He entered the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem about 718. He was ordained in this monastery as a priest and devoted his life to the mission of teaching, preaching and writing. His works cover a wide range of areas in theology with a special emphasis on Incarnation. He composed many hymns to Mary and his ardent love for her inspired him to participate with great courage to defend the cult of sacred images. He wrote four Marian homilies - one on the Nativity and the three on the Dormition. His masterpiece in the field of Marian theology is known as *De Fide Orthodoxa*. It is a treatise on the Orthodox faith, which discusses Marian themes. In fact he is the first author to speak of consecration to Mary.²¹⁹

In his first homily on the Dormition of the Mother of God there is a passage, which mentions the practice of consecration.

"We today also remain near you, O Lady. Yes, I repeat, O Lady, Mother of God and Virgin. We bind our souls to your hope, as to a

²¹⁷ St. Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De virginitate perpetua SS. Mariae*, PL 96, 105B-107A, as cited in:

Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 109-110.

²¹⁸ Cf., Ibid.

²¹⁹ Cf., Gambero, Luigi, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought*, translated by: Thomas Buffer, Ignatius Press, 1999, Pp. 400-401. ; Cf., O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 199.

most firm and totally unbreakable anchor, consecrating to you (anathéménou) mind, soul, body, and all our being and honoring you, as much as we can, with psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles."²²⁰

Gambero says that the Greek term, *anatithemi*, used by Damascene indicates: to dedicate, consecrate, and offer in a religious sense. Therefore his text describes very well the act of a servant and devotee of Mary, who offers his whole self to her. Thus it can be considered as a consecration.²²¹

Msgr. Calkins says that Damascene deliberately used the Greek term *anathéménou* in order to indicate literal meaning of "consecration", which means "setting aside for sacred use". This meaning of the word consecration matches exactly the usage of this word in Leviticus 27:28 and in other places in the Old Testament.²²² He points out to the fact that:

"Giving of oneself to Mary" is so exclusive, absolute and permanent that one who would revoke the gift would be "cut off" (i.e. anathema) from God and his people."²²³

Laurentin points out that the verb *anatithemi* signifies more exactly a total but confident abandonment where in an upward movement is implied. This shows that Damascene clearly respected the transcendence of God. In this act of total abandonment there is a thrust upward to meet God, which the prefix 'ana' indicates.²²⁴

III.5.2. Marian Consecration in the Medieval Period

In the early Middle Ages some key word like *commendatio* and *tradio* were used in relationship to Mary while abandoning oneself to her. The word *commendatio* means *to commend, to confide, to deliver*. This has its roots in the feudal society where the custom of "Patronage" and "Clientele" were widespread. In Roman law these concepts were very important for the hierarchical society. Freeman in order to protect their lives and possessions would vow themselves to the service of their overlords. They would place themselves completely at the disposal of their protector in exchange for the assurance of protection and the necessities of life. The

²²⁰ *Homily 1 on the Dormition 14; PG 96, 720 C-D*, as cited in: Gambero, Luigi, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, op. cit., P. 408.

²²¹ Cf., Ibid.

²²² Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 48.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 108-109.

client would put his hands in the enfolding hands of the master as a sign of promise of respect and service. This feudal oath for loyalty and support to the overlords is called *commendatio*. This medieval relationship of vassalage was broadly applied to describe one's relationship to Mary. Religious professions were formulated according to this model from Eleventh Century onwards.²²⁵

- **Fulbert of Chartres (+1028)**

He was “an Italian educated at Rheims, was bishop of Chartres from 1006 until his death.”²²⁶ He rebuilt the Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Chartres after its complete destruction in 1020. His writings and the Cathedral bear witness to the Marian doctrine and piety of the Eleventh Century.²²⁷ His prayer of giving himself to Mary has got a strong reference to his consecration to Christ in Baptism. His prayer is as follows:

*“Recall, O Lady, that in baptism I was consecrated to the Lord and I later professed with my mouth the name of Christian. But, alas, I never observed all that I promised. Nevertheless through my living and true Lord I have been delivered and confided to you [traditus, commendatus], to you, yourself a servant [literally ‘Slave’, ‘serva’, not ‘ancilla’]. Keep and guide the one thus delivered and confided to you [traditum, commendatum].”*²²⁸

Calkins Points out to one important factor in the feudal oath custom. He says,

*“A freeman who was in debt or otherwise not prospering in his affairs might present himself to an overlord “a rope around his neck, a sign that [he] was to become a serf, engaging his person, his family and his goods.” This, too, could be transferred into the spiritual realm and appropriated to one’s relationship to Our Lady as we see in the case of St. Odilo.”*²²⁹

- **Odilo of Cluny (+1049)**

He who was born in Alvernia around 962 was the fifth abbot of the monastery of Cluny. During a voyage he visited a church dedicated to Mary. He laid hold of the altar cloth and was instantly healed from his infantile paralysis. He consecrated himself to the Blessed Virgin in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Le

²²⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 111-112. ; Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 48-49.

²²⁶ O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 150.

²²⁷ Cf., Gambero, Luigi, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, op. cit., P. 81.

²²⁸ H. Barre, *Prières anciennes de l’Occident à la Mère du Sauveur* [Ancient Prayers of the West to the Mother of the Savior] [Paris, 1963], p. 159, as cited in: Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 112.

²²⁹ Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 49.

Puy, by putting a cord around his neck.²³⁰ He prayed to Our Lady with the following words:

*“O most loving Virgin and Mother of the Savior of all ages, from this day onward take me into your service. And in every circumstances of my life, be with me always, most merciful Advocatrix. Except for God, I place nothing above you, and, as your very own servant, I freely place under your command forever.”*²³¹

While saying this prayer, Odilo placed one end of the cord on the altar of Blessed Virgin, as a sign of offering his personal freedom to her. Through this sign he wanted to express that he is no longer free, but rather a slave at her service.²³²

- **St. Anselm of Lucca (+1086)**

He was entrusted by St. Gregory VII to Countess Mathilda of Tuscany, a powerful ally of the papacy. He composed five prayers and three of them were addressed to Our Lady.²³³ In his prayers he addresses the Blessed Virgin with the following words:

*“.... Therefore, I take refuge, O glorious Lady, in your goodness and indulgence and singular piety. Into your very holy hands, I deliver [commendo] my soul and my body.”*²³⁴

*“Toward your Mercy I rush to take refuge, O Lady [Domina mea], for never have you despised anyone who cried out to you. I implore your goodness in not entering into judgment of your servant.... You know that I have confided myself [commisi] to you, with a total devotion [tota devotione]. I have taken on the marks of slavery to you [no doubt the chain of a medal]. I hope I may die rather than go contrary to your will.”*²³⁵

- **St. Anselm of Canterbury (+1109)**

He was born at Aosta in 1033. He entered the famous Benedictine abbey of Le Bec in 1060. After the death of abbot Lanfranc of Canterbury, he succeeded him as archbishop of Canterbury. He speaks about the Mother of the Lord in his treatises *Cur Deus homo* and *De virginali conceptu et de peccato originali*. There is also a

²³⁰ Cf., Gambero, Luigi, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, op. cit., Pp. 89-90.

²³¹ *Vita Odilonis* 2, I; PL 142, 915-16, as cited in: Ibid., P. 90.

²³² Cf., Ibid.

²³³ Cf., O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 34.

²³⁴ H. Barré, *Prières anciennes de l'Occident à la Mère du Sauveur*, op. cit., p. 229, as cited in: Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 113.

²³⁵ Ibid., P. 23, as cited in: Ibid.

collection of prayers and meditations composed by him, which includes three long invocations addressed to Mary.²³⁶ Through the following consecration prayer St. Anselm offered himself as slave to Mary.

“Act, O Lady, grant, O Lady [Domina], heal the soul of this sinner your servant by the power of the blessed fruit of your womb, who sits at the right hand of the all-powerful Father, great in glory forever.”²³⁷

- **St. Bernard of Clairvaux (+1153)**

He was born at Fontaines-lès Dijon, in Bourgogne, in 1090. He entered the monastery of Cîteaux in 1112. Later he founded another monastery, called Clairvaux. He placed this monastery under the special protection of the Virgin and served as abbot for thirty-eight years. For him the love for the mother of God was inseparable from his life itself.²³⁸ He personally identifies himself as the slave of Mary and gives the following advices to everyone who offers everything to her.

“Whatever you are about to offer, remember to commend it to Mary, so that through the same channel whence grace flowed, it may return to the giver of grace.”²³⁹

- **St. Alexis Falconieri (+1310)**

He was the last survivor of the Seven Founders of the Order of Servites. He recognized the Blessed Virgin as their sole founder.²⁴⁰ In the definition of their oblation it is said as follows:

“At the feet of the glorious Queen of heaven, the Virgin Mary, they offer themselves [contulerunt] with all the purity of their heart, so that, as mediatrix and advocate, she might reconcile them with her son...; from the fact they give themselves [mancipantes] to the wish to be called “slaves” [servi] of St. Mary.”²⁴¹

It is very interesting to note that all these authors never used the word *consecrate* while giving themselves to Mary. Their formulas were *Christocentric* and always had the implication about the transcendence of God. Their relationship to Mary was always seen in their relationship to Christ. But however one cannot

²³⁶ Cf., Gambero, Luigi, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, op. cit., Pp. 109-111.

²³⁷ Id., P. 300, as cited in: Id., Pp. 113-114.

²³⁸ Cf., Id., Pp. 131-132.

²³⁹ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Assumptione B.V. M.*, Sermo IV, in *PL* 183, 428, as cited in:

Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P.155.

²⁴⁰ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 114.

²⁴¹ *La legenda de Origine de Servi di Maria* [The Legend of the origins of the Servites] [Rome, 1982], pp.167-168, as cited in: Ibid., P. 114.

overlook the fact that the meaning and content of the word *consecration* has been growing from seventh century onwards.²⁴²

III.5.3. Marian Consecration during Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

The meaning of the word *consecration* in reference to Mary was taking its richness from Fourteenth Century onwards.

*“Arnold Bostius (+ 1499), a Flemish Carmelite, wrote explicitly about Mary’s patronage and protection of his order in his major Marian work, **De Patronatu et Patrocinio Beatissimae Virginis Mariae in Dicatum sibi Carmeli Ordinem**. Although he did not use the word “consecration” to describe the Carmelite’s relationship to Mary because that meaning had not yet been appropriated to the word, he used all the equivalent Latin expressions such as **dicare, dedicare, devovere, sub qua vivere, etc.**”²⁴³*

He also maintained that *“the wearing of the Carmelite scapular was an explicit sign of the acceptance of Mary’s patronage and protection, of the Carmelites’s belonging to her.”²⁴⁴*

The tradition says that Mary appeared to St. Simon Stock, a brother of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the year 1251 and she gave him a brown scapular with a promise of protection from the eternal fire to all those who die clothed with that. Lay members of a religious order started wearing it as a sign of their religious commitment. Later it became possible for a layperson to receive consecration with the brown scapular without becoming an official member of the Carmelite Order. Many modern acts of Marian consecration include ceremonies with the brown scapular.²⁴⁵

Pope John Paul II took up the same theme in his Message on the 750th Anniversary of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. He stated that: *“the most*

²⁴² Cf., Ibid.

²⁴³ Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 51-52.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., P. 52.

²⁴⁵ Cf., Boss, Sarah Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, in: Boss, Sarah Jane (ed.), op. cit., P. 417.

genuine form of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, expressed by the humble sign of the Scapular, is consecration to her Immaculate Heart."²⁴⁶

A community of nuns dedicated to the Conception of Mary was founded in 1484 in Alcalá. As per their Rule, each member of the community is expected to offer themselves to Christ the Redeemer and to his glorious Mother as living sacrifices. This offering is based on the scriptural passage Romans 12:1, which says "*Present your bodies as a living sacrifice*". This spiritual wave highlighted not only the priority of Christ but also perceived the unity of love between Christ and his Mother. This same spiritual current also invited the faithful to offer themselves as *slaves*.²⁴⁷

The Model of Patronage (*patrocinium*) of Mary started finding its expression in the Marian Congregations (Sodalities), which was established by the Belgian Jesuit, Jean Leunis in 1563 for the students of the Collegio Romano. The main aim of the Sodality was to form militant Christians based on the ideals of St. Ignatius Loyola. The admission to the congregation was placed under the patronage of Our Lady and it soon became an act of oblation to the Virgin. In this act of oblation during the admission ritual the sodalist chooses Mary as "Lady, Patroness and Advocate" and requests her to receive him as her *servum perpetuum*. The text of the admission formula in "The Little Book of the Sodality" (*Libellus sodalitatis*), which was written by Father Franz Coster (+ 1619) and published in 1586 brings out this concept very clearly.²⁴⁸

*"Holy Mary, Mother of God and Virgin, I, _____, take you this day as my Lady [Domina], patron, and advocate. I firmly undertake... never to abandon you, never to do or say anything against you, and never to allow my subordinates to do anything against your honor. I beg of you to accept me as a perpetual slave [servum perpetuum]. Help me in all my actions and do not abandon me at the hour of my death. Amen."*²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, in: Miravalle, Mark I, (ed.), *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, op. cit., P. 735.

²⁴⁷Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 49.

²⁴⁸Cf., Id., Pp. 735-736.

²⁴⁹Id., P. 115.

The Sodalists started using the vocabulary in their prayers that was above criticism: “*the offering of oneself to Mary in order to achieve a consecration to God.*”²⁵⁰

In the Apostolic Constitution *Bis Saeculari die* written by Pope Pius XII in 1948, the Pope mentions that each sodalist makes profession of special devotion to the Mother of God and is dedicated to her by a complete consecration. By this the sodalist binds himself forever to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He expresses this with the following words:

“*Huiusmodi Sodalitates dicendae sunt Marianae, non tantum quod a B. V. Maria titulum assumant, sed quod potissimum sodales singuli erga Deiparam pietatem singularem profiteantur eique plena consecratione devinciantur, qua spondeant, licet non sub peccato, se omni ope pro sua aliorumque christiana perfectione ac salute sempiterna sub B. M. Virginis vexillo pugnatueros; qua quidem consecratione perpetuo sodalis B. M. Virgini obligatur, nisi indignus dimittatur aut animi levitate ipsemet Sodalitatem deserat.*”²⁵¹

In 1575, Sister Ines Bautista joined the Franciscan Convent of the Conception. In the year 1595 she founded a Confraternity of the Slaves of the Most Holy Virgin. The members of this Confraternity considered themselves as *slaves* of Mary.²⁵²

During Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries, we find that the motivating factor, which led the Christians to give themselves as slaves to Mary, was to have an intimate union with Christ. During the Seventeenth Century the devotion of consecrating oneself to Mary started spreading throughout the Catholic part of Europe.

III.5.4. Marian Consecration during the Seventeenth Century

The self-offering formula (*formula offerendi se*) to the Blessed Virgin Mary was published in a work entitled *Maria Deipara, Thronus Dei* by the Jesuit Peitro Antonio Spinelli in the year 1613 in Naples. In this formula he did not use the word

²⁵⁰ Ibid., P. 50.

²⁵¹ Cf., Pius XII, *Bis Saeculari*, No. 8, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19480927_bis-saeculari_it.html, 28.05.13.

²⁵² Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 49.

consecrate.²⁵³ Father La Croix in the year 1622 published in the book *Hortulus Marianus* (*Marian Garden*) the Marian Congregation admission formulae of the Italian Jesuit Pietro Antonio Spinelli as well as that of Father Coster. The formula of Father Spinelli was considered as the principal way of consecrating (*modus consecrandi*) and the formula of Father Coster was considered as the second way of devoting oneself (*modus devovendi*) to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Jungmann comments that this is the first appearance of the word *consecrare* (to consecrate) with the meaning of putting oneself under the *patrocinium* of Mary. The use of the word was the invention of Father La Croix and not of Father Spinelli. In effect, the understanding from the beginning of this usage has been that by the act of consecration to Our Lady the sodalist places himself at the service of Christ the King through her mediation and under her patronage.²⁵⁴

The use of the term ‘consecration’, with the meaning of giving oneself completely to Mary in order to belong more perfectly to Christ, made its way very rapidly into the world. For example, St Louise de Marillac used it for the consecration of her Daughters of Charity to the Virgin on December 8, 1658:

*“We implore you most humbly to accept the irrevocable oblation of our souls and our persons, which we dedicate and consecrate, on this feast day, to your service and to your love.... We adopt you as our lady and mistress and as our patron and advocate.”*²⁵⁵

We will now see how the term ‘consecration’ has continued to be used in the above sense.

- **St. Simon de Rojas (+1624)**

He founded the congregation of the Ave Maria of the Slaves of the Virgin in Madrid on Nov 21, 1616. King Philip, the then most powerful monarch in Europe had a great attachment to this congregation and declared himself to be a slave of the Virgin. He was followed by his children and by the people of his palace. This kind of consecration quickly spread around the world to both east and west.²⁵⁶ Pope John

²⁵³ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 115-116.

²⁵⁴ Cf., Ibid., P. 115, ; Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 736.

²⁵⁵ E. Crapez, *La devotion mariale chez Saint Vincent de Paul et les Lazaristes* [Marian devotion according to St. Vincent de Paul and the Lazarists], in H. du Manoir, *Maria* 3, 1954, p. 105, cited in: Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 116.

²⁵⁶ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 51-52.

Paul II canonized Simon de Rojas on July 3, 1988. In his homily he spoke about the saints filial surrender of himself to Mary. The pope said:

“One aspect of our Saint which must be emphasized is without a doubt, his most unique and faithful love of Our Lady which he had shown since childhood. This intense Marian experience constantly increased within him.... One very typical way he had of living and broadcasting this devotion, was the “servitude” or filial surrender of himself to the Mother of God.... In fact, the new saint is a providential model for us of Marian life, which lies within our reach. He perfectly expressed his will to belong to Mary, in one of his favourite exclamations “Our Lady, may I be completely yours, thus I shall have nothing to fear!”²⁵⁷

- **Barthelemy de los Rios (1580-1652)**

He was the friend, de Rojas, and he propagated this kind of consecration into the Low Countries, Spain, Belgium and across Europe. His work had a huge success that the Prince Wladislaw, the heir to the kingdom of Poland and the cousin of the Infanta Isabella-Clara-Eugenia in 1625 promoted this devotion throughout the Polish kingdom.²⁵⁸

- **Francois Poiré and Stanislas Fencki (+1652)**

Francois Poiré wrote in 1630 a work entitled *The triple Crown of the Blessed Mother of God* where he called for a consecration where the most important thing was “to offer oneself to the Holy Virgin by means of a solemn irrevocable donation.” The Polish Jesuit Fencki wrote a work in 1632 *Mariae mancipatus, sive modus tradendi se in mancipium Deiparae Virginis* (The way to give oneself as a slave to the Virgin Mother of God).²⁵⁹

- **Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629)**

Bérulle is the Founder of the French Oratory of Jesus. He brought the reformed Carmelites to France. He founded the French school of spirituality through his writings and personal influence. This coincided with the great age of French Civilization and with a wide development of Marian doctrine and devotion throughout Europe. He urged in his spiritual directions that the devotion to Mary should not just be external and sensible but should be interior and spiritual. He

²⁵⁷ *Inseg* XI: 3 (1988), 23; *ORE* 1049:2, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 55-56.

²⁵⁸ Cf., Id., P. 52.

²⁵⁹ Cf., Id., P. 52.

counseled his disciples not to separate what God has joined together, namely Jesus and Mary.²⁶⁰ He visited Spain in 1604 and came into contact with the confraternities of the Slaves of the Virgin. His exposure to Spain brought a remarkable influence on his own spirituality, which led him to formulate a ‘vow of servitude’ to the Virgin Mary.²⁶¹ He expresses his vow of servitude in following words:

*“To the perpetual honor of the Mother and the Son, I wish to be in the state and quality of servitude with regard to her who has the state and quality of the Mother of my God ... I give myself to her in the quality of a slave in honor of the gift which the eternal Word made of himself to her in the quality of Son.”*²⁶²

But the idea of giving oneself to Mary as a slave was not well accepted by other theologians and it became a debating topic among them. But Bérulle defended this idea further because of his firm conviction that the consecration was based on *sequela Christi*, the following of Christ. His line is entirely *theocentric* and *Christocentric*. He linked consecration to Mary to the baptism by which God had consecrated us to himself. According to him in consecration one should not retract one’s baptism but instead to renew this consecration of baptism by a formal act.²⁶³ However it is a notable factor that that Bérulle himself proposed to his sons in the Oratory that they should consider their relation to Jesus and Mary as a marriage (*alliance*).²⁶⁴

• King Louis XIII

In the year 1638 King Louis XIII consecrated both his Kingdom and his crown to Mary once and for all “*to the grandeur of God through his Son reduced to our level and to this same Son elevated by his Mother back to God’s level.*”²⁶⁵ This text indicates the theocentric concern and points out to the fact that taking recourse to Mary does not undermine but upheld the absolute transcendence of God.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., Pp. 79-80.

²⁶¹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 57.

²⁶² M. Rigal, *Les Mysteres de Marie*, in *Coll. Les lettres Chretiennes* (Paris, 1961), 204, trans. in: O’Carroll, *Theotokos*, 80, as cited in *Ibid*.

²⁶³ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 50-51.

²⁶⁴ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 60.

²⁶⁵ René Laurentin, *Le voeu de Louis XIII* [The vow of Louis XIII] [Paris, 1988], p. 109, cited in: Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 52.

²⁶⁶ Cf., *Ibid*., P. 53.

- **Henrie Marie Boudon (1624-1702)**

He was an Archdeacon of Ereux in 1654. The influence of Bérulle could be seen in his Marian writings like “an apologia for the slavery of love towards the Blessed Virgin” (*Dieu Seul ou le saint esclavage de l’admirable Mère de Dieu*) in 1667.²⁶⁷ It is very important to mention here that he was the first one to draft an act of consecration to the Heart of Mary.

- **St. John Eudes (1601-1680)**

He was a member of the French Congregation of the Oratory, which was founded by Cardinal de Bérulle, from 1623 to 1643. He founded the congregation of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge, in 1641. His spirituality was centered on the hearts of Jesus and Mary. The efforts of John Eudes led to the celebration of the first Mass of the Heart of Mary in Autun on 8 February, 1648. He had taken the vow of slavery to Mary, which was recommended by Bérulle. He had also written an elaborate *Contract of Marriage with the Most Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God*. His main Marian writings are “*The Admirable Heart of Mary*” (1680) and “*The Admirable Infancy of the Most Holy Mother of God*” (1676). In his book on “*The Admirable Heart of Mary*” he analyzes the various meanings of the word “heart” as applied to Our Lady.²⁶⁸ In his first book ‘*The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*’ he stresses the very close relationship between Jesus and Mary and offers the following counsel about how a Christian should relate to Mary in this book.²⁶⁹

*“You must see and adore her Son in her, and see and adore Him alone. It is thus that she wishes to be honored, because of herself and by herself she is nothing, but her Son Jesus is everything in her, her being, her life, her sanctity, her glory, her power and her greatness. You should thank Our Lord for the glory He has given to Himself through His admirable Mother. You must offer yourself to Him and ask Him to give you to her, causing all your life and all your acts to be **consecrated** to the honor of her life and her actions. You must pray that He will make you participate in her admirable love for Him and in her other virtues. You must ask Him to employ your life in her honor, or rather to honor Himself in her, in whatever way He pleases.*

You must recognize and honor her first as the Mother of God, then as your own Mother and Queen. You must thank her for all the love, glory and perfect service she rendered to Her Son Jesus Christ our Lord. You must refer to her, after God, your being and

²⁶⁷ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 86.

²⁶⁸ Cf., Ibid., P. 201.

²⁶⁹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 59.

your life, subjecting yourself entirely to her as her slave, imploring her to direct you in all your affairs and to assume full power over you, as over something belonging entirely to her, and to dispose of you as she pleases, for the greater glory of her Divine Son."²⁷⁰

This exhortation of John Eudes manifests the Christocentrism of Bérulle and the synthesis of his vows of servitude to Jesus and Mary. It also emphasizes Mary's complete relationship to Christ.²⁷¹

• **Jean Jacques Olier (1608-1657)**

He was the founder of the Seminary of St. Sulpice. The Sulpician ideal of sanctity and its practices were given diffusion and certain permanence. The prayer *O Jesu vivens in Maria* "O Jesus living in Mary" was commonly practiced by them. Olier adapted this prayer from a formula composed by Fr. de Condren. Many of its elements are traceable to Bérulle.²⁷² His remarkable book "*Contract of Holy Matrimony with the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God*" which he wrote and signed in his own blood at Caen on April 28, 1668 highlights his most mature expression of belonging to Mary.²⁷³

It is very obvious from the above mentioned examples of theologians, confraternities and congregations of oblation that the usage of great diversity of formulas to offer oneself to Mary aimed at only one thing, namely: a consecration to God brought about through a total gift to Mary his Mother. But the consecration movement of offering oneself as slave to Mary suffered a major problem. St. Paul spoke about being a "slave" of Christ. This could be easily accepted by any faithful because Christ was God; God is the author of the entire creation and we belong to God the creator much more than a slave belonging to his master.²⁷⁴ This is because:

*"God is the author of our very existence and keeps it in being at its every moment. He alone is the necessary Being, and everything else exists only through him. It is therefore normal that one should recognize our total belonging to God."*²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, vol. 6 (Vannes: Imprimerie Lafoyle Freres, 1905-1911), 189; St. John Eudes, *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, trans. By a Trappist father (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1946), 272, as cited in: Ibid.

²⁷¹ Cf., Id., Pp. 59-60.

²⁷² Cf., O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 272.

²⁷³ Cf., Id., P. 60.

²⁷⁴ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 53.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

This points out to the fact that, we cannot really be the slaves of another creature. It would indeed not only be a blasphemy but also a form of idolatry if we try to become slaves of another creature. We all know that Mary is a creature, of course a special creature, and she is not God. Therefore being a slave to Mary would lead us to idolatry. The Holy Office, therefore, became concerned about the risk, which is deep-seated in all this. As a result in the year 1673 (the year of St. Louis Grignion de Montfort's birth), the Holy Office rejected the consecration of the slaves of the Virgin Mary and prohibited the faithful from carrying the little chains around the neck, which symbolized their slavery to her. This was a big crush in the history of the Consecration tradition.²⁷⁶

A large number of formulas of consecration came into existence during the Seventeenth Century. One of these formulas which became very popular from the Seventeenth Century onwards reached its height in course of the Nineteenth Century. The Jesuit Father Nicolas Zucchi (+1670) was the greatest promoter of this famous consecration formula and he is not the author of this formula.²⁷⁷ The formula is as follows:

*“O My Mother and my Queen! I offer myself entirely to you, and as a testimony to my devotion, **I consecrate to you** today my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, indeed all of myself; for I am yours, good Mother, protect and defend me as your property and possession.”*²⁷⁸

This short consecration formula became the key Prayer of Consecration in spirituality of Schönstatt during the twentieth century. This Consecration formula will be dealt in detail when we discuss about the Marian Consecration in the spirituality of the Covenant of Love in the final chapter of this thesis.

III.5.5. Marian Consecration from Grignion de Montfort to the Eighteenth Century

- **St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716)**

He was born on January 31, 1673, in Upper Brittany, at Montfort-sur-Meu, in the northwest of France. He was the last of the great Bérullians and the greatest proponent of Marian Consecration produced by the French school. He was educated

²⁷⁶ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 53-54.

²⁷⁷ Cf., Ibid., P. 55.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., P. 56.

by the Jesuits first at Rennes where he was a member of Marian Congregation and then for eight years at St. Sulpice, where he worked as a librarian. He worked as a missionary in some ten dioceses of western France during the years 1700-1716 and founded two new religious societies, the Company of Mary (De Montfort Fathers) and the Daughters of Wisdom. All those who knew him as a child and as a growing boy would agree that he was seized by Mary right from the moment of his baptism. He had written 164 Canticles, totaling more than 20,000 lines, but only 24 lines sing the praises of Mary. His success was owed to two of his famous writings on Mary, which popularized the Montfortian way of living, the devotion called servitude of Love, are *The Secret of Mary* and *A Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. The Secret of Mary is redacted in the form of a letter of spiritual direction and deals with a method of personal union with Jesus through Mary.²⁷⁹

St. Louis Marie was a tireless preacher of “*Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary*”. He later wrote down the substance of his inspired preaching and sermons in the book, which is his principal work today known as *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, which recommended the consecration of the slaves of the Virgin Mary. Since the Holy Office rejected this kind of consecration already in 1673, St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort did not publish his treatise in order to avoid the problems with the inquisition. Over one hundred years after his death in 1842 this manuscript²⁸⁰ was found hidden in a secret compartment of a chest at the Motherhouse of the Montfort Fathers, Vendée in France. As mentioned earlier, even though this form of devotion has found criticism and rejection it nevertheless contributed in a tremendous manner for the new start of Marian devotion after the era of Enlightenment, which turned out to be an immense success on a global scale.²⁸¹

The key element in the teaching of St. Louis Marie is that the Wisdom of God became incarnate through Mary and he believed that the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God should be preceded by an Age of Mary. And hence he teaches that the way by which the Christians should approach God

²⁷⁹ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 272, ; Cf., Le Borgne, O., *Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort (1673-1716)*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 443-444.

²⁸⁰ *The first part of the manuscript must be missing or lost because Montfort himself refers to a first part in his treatise True devotion (Cf., 227,228) which does not fit aptly to the present state of the manuscript.*

²⁸¹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 156, ; Cf., Gaffney, Patrick,J., *The Holy Slavery of Love*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1961, P. 159.

should be the same way as that by which God approached humanity, namely, through Mary. Therefore to make oneself a slave of Mary is to offer oneself totally to Christ.²⁸²

Montfort believed that he is called by God to form an army of men and women to combat the world and to form true apostles of the latter times. They will be serving as the instruments of the Spirit to renew this earth in Jesus Christ for the glory of the Father. For this to happen there should be an ongoing interior renewal of each person in the army. They must undergo a dynamic change and a deeper inner transformation. He proposes ‘*Consecration*’, the lived out baptismal covenant as the principal means for the formation of these apostles of Jesus Christ. Consecration (*le contrat d’alliance*) is the central theme in the life, teaching and preaching of Montfort. “*Covenant contract with God*” is one of Montfort’s expressions for the consecration or the renewal of baptismal vows.²⁸³ Montfort was very aware of the problems concerning consecration and of the continuing necessity of theocentrism. Therefore he adhered to the fact that consecration should be made to God alone and only through Mary.²⁸⁴

The Marian Consecration of Montfort is undoubtedly Trinitarian and Christocentric. It is seen as consecration to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit and Mary is seen as the way to the Lord. In his writings he stresses the centrality of Christ and underlines the fundamental truth that Jesus Christ is the final goal of all our devotion to Mary. This he mentions very clearly in his *Treatise on True devotion*: “*Jesus, our Saviour, true God and true man must be the ultimate end of all our other devotions; otherwise they would be false and misleading.*”²⁸⁵ Montfort finds it is blasphemous, to take out Mary from the Trinitarian and Christological context. It is only in this context that the Marian Consecration of Montfort can be understood rightly.²⁸⁶

²⁸² Cf., Boss, Sarah, Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, in: Boss, Sarah Jane (ed.), op. cit., P. 416.

²⁸³ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignion De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, in: *Marian Studies*, Vol. XXXV, The Mariological Society of America, Dayton, 1984, Pp. 114-116.

²⁸⁴ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 54.

²⁸⁵ *True Devotion to Mary*, 61, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone: The collected writings of St. Louis Marie de Montfort*, Montfort Publications, 2008, P. 307.

²⁸⁶ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignion De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., Pp. 116-117.

The Act of Consecration is basically for Montfort nothing but the renewal of baptism. The reality is that through Christ, we have been made one with the Father, in the power of the Spirit. Through baptism we have been inserted into the saving life of this New Adam. Therefore he considers that the Act of Consecration is nothing less than the renewal of our Baptism. This stress on baptism, which is so central in Montfort's life²⁸⁷ and apostolate remains at the root of the Act of Consecration.²⁸⁸

Pope Clemens XI requested Montfort to preach the renewal of baptism throughout Western France. During his missions, he used to highly dramatize this *contrat d'alliance* by requesting the parishioners to proceed first to the baptismal font, where they would formally renew their baptism and then to the altar of Our Lady where they would consecrate themselves to her. He has got a clear reason to dramatize the Act of Consecration to this extent, because according to him, renewal of our baptism, our insertion into the life of Christ is not possible if we ignore the necessary and underlying element of Mary's participation in the redemption. Based on this reason Montfort calls his consecration the "perfect" renewal of the vows of baptism.²⁸⁹ He says:

*"...perfect consecration to Jesus is but a perfect and complete consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin, which is the devotion I teach; or in other words, it is the perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy baptism."*²⁹⁰

Bérulle made a link between baptism and his "vow of servitude to Jesus" but Montfort links Mary with one's baptismal commitment as well. He proposes a renewal of one's baptismal promises "through the hands of Mary" in his classic work *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*.²⁹¹

"In holy baptism we do not give ourselves to Jesus explicitly through Mary, nor do we give him the value of our good actions. After baptism we remain entirely free either to apply that value to anyone we wish or keep it for ourselves. But by this consecration

²⁸⁷ Montfort Chose to renounce his family name, Grignion, in order to be called simply, the Father from Montfort not because of any attachment to his birthplace but for the reason that it was there that he was baptized into Christ. (see: Footnote, No. 143, in: Ibid., P. 147.)

²⁸⁸ Cf., Ibid., P. 147.

²⁸⁹ Cf., Ibid., P. 148.

²⁹⁰ *True Devotion to Mary*, 120, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 327.

²⁹¹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 739.

we give ourselves explicitly to Jesus through Mary's hands and we include in our consecration the value of all our actions."²⁹²

Montfort sees Mary as so intrinsic to salvation history that according to his thought the renewal of baptism, which he terms as an Act of Consecration must have a Marian dimension. Therefore in his formula of consecration, the demands of baptism and the role of Mary are intermingled²⁹³:

"Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! Most lovable and adorable Jesus, true God and true man, only Son of the eternal Father and of Mary always Virgin, I adore you profoundly dwelling in the splendor of your Father from all eternity and in the virginal womb of Mary, your most worthy Mother, at the time of your Incarnation.... But I must confess that I have not kept the vows and promises which I made to you so solemnly at my baptism, I have not fulfilled my obligations.... I dare no longer approach the holiness of your majesty on my own. That is why I turn to the intercession and the mercy of your holy Mother, whom you yourself have given me to mediate with you. Through her I hope to obtain from you contrition and pardon for my sins, and that Wisdom whom I desire to dwell in me always."²⁹⁴

For Montfort, to declare that we are anything of ourselves is absurd. All is grace, all is gift, and all belongs to Jesus and Mary. We are all the slaves of Jesus and Mary because of salvation history. Montfort states in his *True devotion to Mary* that "baptism has made us the slaves of Jesus Christ," and through the consecration, we move from the state of merely "slaves of nature" to the state of "slaves of love". The consecration is a perfect renewal of baptism since it formally and lovingly surrenders all to Jesus and Mary so that we may more deeply share the Life of the Spirit. We are the loving conquest by Jesus and Mary and hence we must surrender all to them.²⁹⁵ Montfort called for the renewal of this consecration in exactly the same formula TOTUS TUUS, as found on the coat of arms of Pope John Paul II.

"The TOTUS, for Montfort, has no exceptions. The "I" must freely empty itself into THE THOU so that it may be its true self. In the Act of Consecration, man finds his identity not in the pride of posing as being-in-himself but in the humility of a loving, lived out

²⁹² *True Devotion to Mary*, 126, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 329.

²⁹³ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignion De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., P. 149.

²⁹⁴ *Love of eternal wisdom*, 223, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 112-113.

²⁹⁵ Cf., Id., Pp. 149-150.

relationship with THE OTHER, the source of all being, Love itself."²⁹⁶

Emptying oneself by means of total surrender is an underlying element in consecration. Following the thought line of H. Boudon and the custom of the times Montfort, lists out in detail what we have to "give" to Mary in our consecration in order to share in the treasures of the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom.²⁹⁷

*"This devotion consists in giving oneself entirely to Mary in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her. It requires us to give: 1. Our body with its senses and members; 2. Our soul with its faculties; 3. Our present material possessions and all we shall acquire in the future; 4. Our interior and spiritual possessions, that is, our merits, virtues and good actions of the past, the present and the future. In other words, we give her all that we possess both in our natural life and in our spiritual life as well as everything we shall acquire in the future in the order of nature, of grace, and of glory in heaven. This we do without any reservation, not even of a penny, a hair, or the smallest good deed. And we give for all eternity without claiming or expecting, in return for our offering and our service, any other reward than the honour of belonging to our Lord through Mary and in Mary...."*²⁹⁸

Furthermore, Montfort framed a formula of consecration, which he has left us in his most theological and central work, *The Love of Eternal Wisdom*. In this he highlights in detail not only about what one should consecrate but also underlines the fact that Jesus is the goal of the act of consecration and how Mary plays an intermediary role²⁹⁹:

"I turn to you, then, Mary immaculate, living tabernacle of God, in whom eternal Wisdom willed to receive the adoration of both men and angels.... Grant my desire for divine Wisdom and, in support of my petition, accept the promises and the offering of myself which I now make.... This day, with the whole court of heaven as witness, I choose you, Mary, as my Mother and Queen. I surrender and consecrate myself to you, body and soul, with all that I possess, both spiritual and material, even including the spiritual value of all my actions, past, present, and to come. I give you the full right to dispose of me and all that belongs to me, without any reservations, in whatever way you please, for the greater glory of God in time and throughout eternity. Accept, gracious Virgin, this little offering of my slavery to honour and imitate the obedience which eternal

²⁹⁶ Ibid., Pp. 150-151.

²⁹⁷ Cf., Ibid., P.151.

²⁹⁸ *True Devotion to Mary*, 121, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 327.

²⁹⁹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 62.

*Wisdom willingly chose to have towards you, his Mother.... O admirable Mother, present me to your dear Son as his slave now and for always, so that he who redeemed me through you, will now receive me through you. Virgin most faithful, make me in everything so committed a disciple, imitator, and slave of Jesus, your Son, incarnate Wisdom, that I may become, through your intercession and example, fully mature with the fullness which Jesus possessed on earth, and with the fullness of his glory in heaven. Amen.”*³⁰⁰

From the above consecration formula it is very clear, that for Montfort, nothing whatsoever is to be withheld in this Act of Consecration. He insists that everything to the absolute extent possible must be given to Mary. The surrendering is to be total. Only then, in Montfort’s eyes, we are effectively recognizing the reality that Jesus redeems us through Mary. Only then can we fully experience the the more intimate sharing in the life of Jesus and Mary. It is this underlying thought which runs through Montfort’s understanding of the Act of Consecration. We surrender all, in order to be totally open to the power of the redemption, which comes to us from Jesus through the necessary, eternal *fiat* of Mary. Thus consecration according to Montfort is nothing but implementing in us a new depth of life in Christ, Eternal Wisdom, the Son of Mary.³⁰¹

Montfort is not satisfied only with the recital of an Act of Consecration. This he says very clearly in his work *Secret of Mary*:

*“It is not enough to give ourselves just once as a slave to Jesus through Mary; nor is it enough to renew that consecration once a month or once a week. That alone would make it just a passing devotion and would not raise the soul to the level of holiness which it is capable of reaching. It is easy to enroll in a confraternity; easy to undertake this devotion, and say every day the few vocal prayers prescribed. The chief difficulty is to enter into its spirit, which requires an interior dependence on Mary, and effectively becoming her slave and the slave of Jesus through her.”*³⁰²

This interior spirit of total consecration to Mary is a more essential feature for Montfort in the devotion of consecration than the external actions. The external actions are important but the interior practices have a paramount importance in the Montfort way of consecration. The interior practises indicate the permanent state of

³⁰⁰ *Love of eternal wisdom*, 224-227, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 113-114.

³⁰¹ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignion De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., Pp. 153-154.

³⁰² *Secret of Mary*, 44, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 274.

evangelical dependence on Jesus and Mary, which the *Act of Consecration* has begun.³⁰³ He sums up this in the formula:

*“The exterior practices of this devotion which I have just dealt with should be observed as far as one's circumstances and state of life permit. They should not be omitted through negligence or deliberate disregard. In addition to them, here are some very sanctifying interior practices They may be expressed in four words, doing everything **THROUGH** Mary, **WITH** Mary, **IN** Mary, and **FOR** Mary, in order to do it more perfectly **through** Jesus, **with** Jesus, **in** Jesus, and **for** Jesus.”*³⁰⁴

At this point it is necessary to mention that the fourfold formula “*through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary*” is not the original creation of Montfort. This formula is much more of ancient origin. Nicholas of Clairvaux (+1176 or 1178) in his *Sermo de Annuntiatione*, Arnold Bostius (+1499) and the Venerable Michael of St. Augustine (+1684) used somewhat similar expression. But none of these authors had any influence on Montfort.³⁰⁵

To do all our actions ‘*through Mary*’ indicates renouncing our own dispositions and trying to do everything with the intentions of the Mother of God. This he clearly explains with the following words:

“The person who wishes to be led by this spirit of Mary:

1 Should renounce his own spirit, his own views and his own will before doing anything (...)

*2 We should give ourselves up to the spirit of Mary to be moved and directed as she wishes. We should place and leave ourselves in her virginal hands, like a tool in the hands of a craftsman or a lute in the hands of a good musician. We should cast ourselves into her like a stone thrown into the sea. (...).”*³⁰⁶

To do all our actions ‘*with Mary*’ means we are invited to imitate Mary. It indicates that one should accomplish one’s actions as Mary would.

³⁰³ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignion De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., P. 154.

³⁰⁴ *True Devotion to Mary*, 257, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 371.

³⁰⁵ Cf., Footnote, No. 76, in: Gaffney, Patrick, J., *The Holy Slavery of Love*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op.cit., P.158.

³⁰⁶ *True Devotion to Mary*, 259, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 372.

*“The essential practice of this devotion is to perform all our actions with Mary. This means that we must take her as the accomplished model for all we have to do.”*³⁰⁷

*“We must do everything with Mary, that is to say, in all our actions we must look upon Mary, although a simple human being, as the perfect model of every virtue and perfection, fashioned by the Holy Spirit for us to imitate, as far as our limited capacity allows. In every action then we should consider how Mary performed it or how she would perform it if she were in our place. (...)”*³⁰⁸

To do all our actions ‘in Mary’ means:

*“We must always act in Mary, that is to say, we must gradually acquire the habit of recollecting ourselves interiorly and so form within us an idea or a spiritual image of Mary. She must become, as it were, an oratory for the soul where we offer up our prayers to God without fear of being ignored. (...) She will be a sacred place of repose where we can contemplate God in her company. (...) When we pray we will pray in Mary. When we receive Jesus in Holy Communion we will place him in Mary for him to take his delight in her. If we do anything at all, it will be in Mary, and in this way Mary will help us to forget self everywhere and in all things.”*³⁰⁹

And finally to do all our actions ‘for Mary’ means:

*“We must perform all our actions for Mary, which means that as slaves of this noble Queen we will work only for her, promoting her interests and her high renown, and making this the first aim in all our acts, while the glory of God will always be our final end. In everything we must renounce self-love....”*³¹⁰

“Finally we must do everything for Mary. Since we have given ourselves completely to her service, it is only right that we should do everything for her as if we were her personal servant and slave. This does not mean that we take her for the ultimate end of our service for Jesus alone is our ultimate end. But we take Mary for our proximate end, our mysterious intermediary and the easiest way of reaching him. (...) We must defend her privileges when they are questioned and uphold her good name when it is under attack. (...) We must speak up and denounce those who distort devotion to her by outraging her Son, and at the same time we must apply ourselves to spreading this true devotion. As a reward for these little services, we should expect nothing in return save the honour of belonging to such a lovable Queen and the joy of being united

³⁰⁷ *Secret of Mary*, 45, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 274.

³⁰⁸ *True Devotion to Mary*, 260, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 372.

³⁰⁹ *Secret of Mary*, 47, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 275.

³¹⁰ *Secret of Mary*, 49, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 275.

*through her to Jesus, her Son, by a bond that is indissoluble in time and in eternity. Glory to Jesus in Mary! Glory to Mary in Jesus! Glory to God alone!”*³¹¹

Thus from the above-mentioned series of quotations we understand that for Montfort the essential interior spirit in the Act of Consecration must express itself in a life lived in union with Mary. Consecration to Mary is not simply an added devotion but represents the crowning of Marian devotion. Consecration, the perfect renewal of our baptismal vows must have a clear Marian dimension, which ensures: openness to the Spirit *through* Mary; familiarity of mind *with* the model of life of Mary; consciousness of the maternal love *in* Mary and a total commitment to service *for* Mary and through her to service for Christ. This new Marian way of life is a means for Christian perfection, because it invites Mary along with her powerful intercession into every area of the Christian life. Montfort was the one who shaped this new Marian way of life into a devotion, which essentially consists of one single act which, under various formulas and conditions, can be applied to our whole life, both interior and exterior. Although he places “God alone” in the forefront, it does not diminish the role of Mary, for Mary is already caught up completely in and with God, just as God is in and over all. ³¹² If we try to do our best to live out all the implications of the Montfortian Consecration, then we are acting according to the suggestion of St. Pius X:

*“For who does not know that there is no more certain and easy way than Mary to unite all with Christ and to attain through Him the perfect adoption of sons, that we may be holy and immaculate in the sight of God?”*³¹³

As Montfort foretold, his masterpiece on the *True Devotion to Mary* was hidden in the darkness during the Eighteenth Century.

“I clearly foresee that raging beasts will come in fury to tear to pieces with their diabolical teeth this little book and the one the Holy Spirit made use of to write it, or they will cause it at least to lie hidden in the darkness and silence of a chest and so prevent it

³¹¹ *True Devotion to Mary*, 265, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 374-375.

³¹² Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *The Holy Slavery of Love*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op.cit., Pp. 158-159, ; Cf., Le Borgne, O., *Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716)*, op.cit., P. 445, ; Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 157, ; Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 122.

³¹³ *Ad diem illum* (Feb.2, 1904), ASS 36:451, cited in: Most, William, G., *Our Lady after Vatican II*, op. cit., P. 192.

from seeing the light of day. They will even attack and persecute those who read it and put into practice what it contains. But no matter! So much the better! It even gives me encouragement to hope for great success at the prospect of a mighty legion of brave and valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, both men and women, who will fight the devil, the world, and corrupt nature in the perilous times that are sure to come."³¹⁴

His work came to light in the Nineteenth Century and played a very vital role for the dawn of a New Marian era. As it was mentioned earlier the *Treatise on True Devotion* was found only in 1842 and together with the other writings of Montfort, it was sent to Rome for careful study in view of his proposed beatification. The first reaction of the Promoter of the Faith was a strong condemnation. However, other censors appointed by Rome clearly answered all objections against the True Devotion, and in 1853 it was officially declared to be free from all error. This approval of the Congregation of Rites has been re-echoed by bishops and theologians of the Church. St. Pius X practiced this devotion by himself and not only did he declare his dependence on Montfort in writing his encyclical *Ad diem illum*, but he granted a plenary indulgence "*in perpetuum*" to those who recite St. Louis' formula of consecration. He himself joined the Association of the Priests of Mary and granted the apostolic blessing to all those who even merely read the *True Devotion*. Benedict XV, in a letter to the Superior General of the Montfort Fathers declared that it was their vocation to spread devotion to Our Lady by explaining the *True Devotion*, Pope Pius XII in the *De tuto* decree for Montfort's canonization said that the saint's *True Devotion* is spoken of as a shorter path to perfection. On the following day, addressing the pilgrims who had come to Rome for the canonization, the Holy Father spoke of St. Louis as the guide who leads us to Mary and from Mary to Jesus. He also appreciated him as one who has worked the most to make Mary loved and served. The First International Marian Congress, held at Fribourg in 1902, The Marian Congress of Rome (1904) the Marian Congresses of Einsiedeln (1906) and the special Marian-Montfortian Congress held at Barcelona in 1918 were very eloquent in its praise of St. Louis de Montfort.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ *True Devotion to Mary*, 114, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P.324.

³¹⁵ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick,J., *The Holy Slavery of Love*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op.cit., Pp. 159-161.

- **St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)**

He was the most important writer on Mary during the Eighteenth Century. He was of great influence on Mariology during the Age of Enlightenment. His Marian devotion and Marian enthusiasm were of great contrasts with the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment. He was born in Naples in the year 1696. His deep devotion to Mary was born from his conviction that, through the interventions of the Mother of God he was healed from various illnesses and she favoured him with supernatural apparitions and communications. His best-known Marian work is *The Glories of Mary*, published in two volumes in 1750. It was the most widely distributed book on Mary in modern times. Naples was influenced by the so-called reformers- Widenfeld, Muratori and the Jansenists, which lead to the decline of Marian devotion. Therefore through his work *The Glories of Mary* Alphonsus Liguori wanted the faithful to become enamoured of Mary through reading and above all wanted to provide the priests with the necessary and suitable materials for preaching and also for spreading the Marian devotion.³¹⁶

The part one of *The Glories of Mary* is an explanation of the famous prayer, the *Salve Regina* in a very detailed form. The second part is made up of series of discourses on the major feasts of Mary, like Immaculate Conception, Nativity, Presentation, Annunciation, Visitation and two sermons on the Assumption. This section contains also his reflections on the seven sorrows of Mary and on the Virtues of Mary and it concludes with the advice on the traditional devotional practice to Mary. The texts of *The Glories of Mary* represent an intellectual defence of Mariology in the Eighteenth Century with references to multiple authors, like the Fathers of the Church, St. Bernard, St. Bridget of Sweden, who are quoted in brief excerpts. Liguori promoted a maximalist Mariology and emphasized on Mary's powerful role as Mediatrix and Advocate. He expressed the belief in the general mediation of grace through Mary. The Marian "Minimalists" attacked his theory of Mary's mediation and the language in which it was expressed. But however it remained as a successful challenge to Jansenism. St. Alphonsus Liguori strongly recommends the traditional devotions which is evident in the formula of consecration to Mary.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Cf., Mores, S., *Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 445-446.

³¹⁷ Cf., O'Carroll, Michael, op. cit., Pp. 14-15.

*“Queen of Heaven, most Holy Mary, I was once a Slave of Sin, but now **I Consecrate myself to thee** as thy Client forever. I give myself to Thine Honor and Service for the Rest of my Life. Do not reject me as I deserve, but accept me as thy Servant. I have placed all my Hope in thee as my Mother. I bless and thank Almighty God, because in His Mercy, He has given me this Confidence in thee.*

It is true that in the past I have shamefully fallen into Sin; but I Trust that, through thy Prayers and the Merits of Jesus Christ, I have been forgiven. But yet, my Mother, this is not enough. One fear I have which troubles me: that I may Fall into Sin again and lose the Grace of God. The Dangers are Constant; my Enemies never sleep; and new Temptations will assail me.

*O my Lady, Protect me. Help me in the Assaults of Hell, so **I may never again offend thy Divine Son Jesus**. Let not the same thing happen again, that I lose my Soul, Heaven, and God. This is the Grace I beg of thee, O Mary; this is what I long for; obtain this Grace for me through thy Prayers. So I Hope. So may it be. Amen”³¹⁸*

Though the soundness of his devotion is manifested very strongly in the formula of Consecration to Mary, still the key element revolves around her Son Jesus that we should never offend Him.³¹⁹ This is also very evident in his other consecration formula.

“Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, I am not worthy to be thy Servant. But moved by thy Marvelous Compassion and my own Desire to serve thee, here and now, in the Presence of my Guardian Angel and the Whole Court of Heaven, I choose thee as my Lady, Advocate, and Mother. I Firmly Purpose to love and serve thee always, and to do all I can to inspire others to Love and Serve thee.

O Mother of God and my own most Compassionate Mother, I Beseech thee, by the Blood which thy Son shed for me, to receive me into the Number of thy Servants as thy Child and Servant forever. Assist me in all my Thoughts, Words, and Actions in every Moment of my Life, so that every step I take, every breath I draw, may be directed to the Greater Glory of my God.

*Through your Powerful Intercession, may **I never again offend my Beloved Jesus**. Help me to Love and Glorify Him in this Life. Help me to Love thee also, Dear and Beloved Mother, and to go on Loving thee forever in the Happiness of Heaven.*

³¹⁸ Saint Alphonsus Liguori *Consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, in: http://copiosa.org/heart/heart_immaculate_liguori.htm, 12.06.13. (My emphasis)

³¹⁹ Cf., Id., P. 15.

*My Mother Mary, I commend my Soul to thee now, and especially at the Moment of Death. So I Hope. So may it be. Amen”*³²⁰

It is an undeniable fact that his pastoral character of Mariology revitalized the Marian devotion of the faithful during the Eighteenth Century by improving upon its spiritual tone. Though the works of this saint of the Eighteenth Century brought a revival in the field of Marian devotion, one cannot overlook the fact that the Eighteenth Century was a dark period for Marian theology and in the growth of Marian Movement. The Marian Movement, which was born at the beginning of Seventeenth Century declined in the course of Eighteenth Century. It received a deathblow at the time of French Revolution, when the cult of “The goddess of reason” was at its peak. This cult practically tried to eclipse the devotion to the Virgin Mary.³²¹

III.5.6. Marian Consecration during Nineteenth Century

Jansenism and rationalism affected the theology and the devotion to Mary to a great extent in the early decades of Nineteenth Century. But this situation did not last long. The unfolding of the devotion of Marian Consecration continued even in the difficult period after the French Revolution with holy founders such as Bl. William Joseph Chaminade, who incorporated total consecration to Mary into the Society of Mary, which he founded as the object of a special perpetual religious vow. During the Nineteenth Century Offerings and consecrations through Mary had a very blossoming time and this devotion was first promoted by William Joseph Chaminade (+1850).³²² His life spanned between the French Revolution and the Bourbon Restoration. He played a very important role in the Bordeaux region in the revival of Catholic life and the rehabilitation of priests. He is the sole Mariologist of the first half of the Nineteenth Century and his varied apostolate was centered on Mary.³²³

- **Bl. William Joseph Chaminade (1761-1850)**

He was born in Perigueux, France, near Bordeaux on April 8, 1761 and he is the second youngest of Blaise and Catherines’s 15 children. He was ordained as Priest in the year 1785. During the French Revolution he refused to swear allegiance to the Civil Constitution, which rejected papal authority and aimed to establish a

³²⁰ Id. (My emphasis)

³²¹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 62.

³²² Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 743.

³²³ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 99.

national church. Therefore he hid himself in order to avoid exile or the guillotine. As the revolution became weak losing its influence, Chaminade emerged from his hiding. But he was forced into exile at Saragossaa, Spain, in 1797 for three years. There he spent many hours in prayer at the great shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar, where he was inspired with a vision for the re-evangelization of France. A special message from Mary inspired him to establish a family of religious and laity that would participate with Mary in her apostolic mission to bring Jesus to others. Chaminade opened an oratory when he returned to Bordeaux in 1800, which attracted interested faithful to worship services and faith formation discussion. Within a year he formed a group of clerics and laity, which turned out to be the nucleus for his famous apostolic sodality that was consecrated to Mary Immaculate. He founded the Daughters of Mary Immaculate in 1816 and the Society of Mary (Marianists) in 1817.³²⁴ His first members, who would later be called Marianists, were members of the Marian Sodalties, men and women who wished to respond to the Lord with a more radical commitment, an extension of their baptismal consecration and of their devotion to the Virgin Mary.³²⁵ The Marianists concentrated in the establishment and management of Christian schools and teacher training colleges, and the formation of lay-managed faith communities. In 1849 the first Marianists came to Ohio in the USA and laid the foundations for the present University of Dayton the following year. He is recognized as the 19th century apostle of Mary who had the facility of relating doctrine to ministry and mission, and emphasized the importance of Mary's role in the life of Christians.³²⁶

It is very essential at this point to mention an underlying fact concerning the Marian theology of Chaminade. The French School, especially of Olier, influenced Chaminade's spirituality and Mariology. His doctrine represents a rejuvenation and development of Bérullian spirituality. Chaminade's deep conviction of the conquering role of the Virgin Mary bears a striking resemblance to St. Louis de Montfort's *Treatise on True Devotion to Mary*. Though there exists a similarity in their teachings and in their foretelling Mary's role in our times, a comparative study of the two doctrines reveals real differences and indicates that, Chaminade could not

³²⁴ Cf., Samaha, John, M., *The Chaminade Legacy*, in: <http://www.marianist.com/files/2011/06/The-Chaminade-Legacy.pdf>, 12.06.13.

³²⁵ Cf., Bl. William Joseph Chaminade, in: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20000903_bl-chaminade_en.html, 13.06.13.

³²⁶ Id.

have been influenced by the prophetic teaching of St. Louis de Montfort's, because the *Treatise on True Devotion to Mary* was not discovered until 1842. The doctrine and all of the declarations of Father Chaminade precede 1842. Chaminade's inspiration regarding Mary's apostolic role in our time was from Our Lady of the Pillar at Saragossa, not from any predecessor or contemporary.³²⁷

Chaminade always had a spontaneous relationship with Mary. This relationship or bond with Mary, he termed it later as devotion, dedication, alliance, piety and consecration. Chaminade was very firmly convinced that our relation to Mary must be a participation in the relationship, which exists between Jesus and Mary. For him 'devotion' means an enduring attitude and disposition. It is not a single action, but a commitment. He upheld the view that our oneness with Christ in His Mystical Body enables us to become a child of Mary with Jesus Christ. The core of this child-like devotedness to Mary was Chaminade's insistence on her spiritual maternity. The notion of Mary's apostolic mission inspired him to establish a new religious family, which is totally consecrated to her for the accomplishment of this mission. Chaminade made the Marianist profession of vows as a total consecration to Mary. The originality of his concept is that the consecration to Mary is not added to the religious profession, but the profession itself is a consecration to her. According to him, the state of religious life enables one to fulfill the scope of one's consecration to Mary in a more perfect manner. Chaminade added a fourth vow to the three regular vows of a religious life, namely, a vow of stability. This vow of stability has the special Marian sense of perseverance in her service. And hence this vow is, in reality, a consecration to the Blessed Virgin.³²⁸ In the The Rule Book of the Marianist the section on *Consecration by Vows and Marianist Stability* states the above mentioned notion of consecration by vow in a very clear Manner:

"In order to consecrate ourselves to God by solid and stable bonds, we make a public profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience. By this profession we become members of the Society that belongs to Mary and thus dedicate ourselves to her.

Desiring to make this dedication permanent and explicit, we add at perpetual profession the vow of stability, sign and seal of our vocation. By this vow we promise to persevere in the Society of

³²⁷ Cf., Samaha, John, M., *Mary's Apostolic Mission: Chaminade's contribution to Mariology*, in: <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/meditations/chaminade/mariology.html>, 13.06.13.

³²⁸ Cf., Ibid.

Mary. In the spirit of this vow we seek to make Mary known, loved, and served and never to refuse her Society our cooperation. Thus, by choosing to follow the Lord in the Society of Mary, we commit ourselves irrevocably to the service of Mary, Mother of God and our Mother."³²⁹

The offering of one's simple services, the readiness to labor under the orders of Mary and the willingness to combat at her side remain as the inspiration behind the vow of stability which Marianist men and women religious still make today.³³⁰ Together with their Founder Chaminade they are convinced of the following:

*"We are therefore in a particular manner the auxiliaries and the instruments of the Blessed Virgin in the great work of the reform of morals and in the preservation and the propagation of the faith, and thereby in the sanctification of our neighbour . . . happy to be able to spend in her service a life and a strength which are her due (MW 2, § 75)."*³³¹

These words of the Founder reveal the existence of a stable and permanent bond freely established between Mary and us. This reciprocal bond results from the establishment of an alliance with Mary. In the interior of his foundations there developed progressively the tradition of an alliance with Mary. The ring symbolizes this alliance, which, from the beginning, all Marianist men and women religious have worn on their right hand.³³² The chapter on "the society of Mary in the family of Mary" in the Rule Book also clearly lists out the practice of living out this vow of stability. The section on Practice of Marianist Stability states the following:

"The vow of stability is a public pledge by the Marianist to commit himself to the life and mission of our Society. It leads him to more than a merely passive perseverance, prompting him to be faithful in living all aspects of Marianist religious life and to take the means necessary to deepen his interest in the life of the Society and strengthen his commitment.

In particular, Marianist stability motivates the religious to penetrate into the vision of Father Chaminade concerning the role of Mary. As he enters into the spirit of his vocation, the Marianist finds joy in honoring Mary and speaking of her mission. He

³²⁹ Chaminade, William Joseph, *Rule of life of the Society of Mary*, Nos. 14-15, in: <http://www.marianist.org/PDFs/Rule%20of%20Life/RULE-en.pdf>, 13.06.13.

³³⁰ Cf., Armbruster, Jean-Baptiste, *Devotion to Mary in Chaminade's Life and Thought*, Translated by Joseph Roy, SM, and Joseph Stefanelli, in: <http://www.marianist.com/nacms/index.php/publications/prayer/devotion-to-mary-in-chaminade-s-life-and-thought.html>, 13.06.13.

³³¹ As cited in: Ibid.

³³² Cf., Ibid.

consecrates his energies to the formation of others in faith, especially to the development of the Family of Mary.

The vow of stability helps the religious experience the creative power of permanent commitment. It supports his fidelity in moments of weakness and thus leads to depth in maturity and fervor in love.

At the time of perpetual profession the religious receives a gold ring as a sign of the commitment by which he places himself permanently at the service of God in the Society of Mary.”³³³

Thus we understand that for Chaminade the “*Alliance with Mary*”, has profound affective connotations without which it would not achieve completely its fullness or its dynamism. It is the binding force and the energy for the Marianists, which enables the members of the communities to become images of a people of saints. The expression “*Alliance with Mary*” (*Alianza con Maria*) stands for the common bond of the Marianists with Mary. In this pact of solidarity, Mary gives them protection and guidance, but the “*Alliance with Mary*” is primarily a common mission and it is an active commitment to the mission and work of Jesus Christ. This is the reason why Marianists are generally known as Missionaries of Mary.³³⁴

“The alliance with Mary accentuates the essentially missionary dimension that is always part of the foundational charism of Father Chaminade. It is an alliance with her to continue “incarnating” Christ among people and to fight against evil in all its manifestations. Mary is the mother that establishes Jesus into humanity, and the first person freed from sin and death: immaculate and assumed into heaven.”³³⁵

As the Nineteenth Century begins to fall into historical perspective due to the blossoming of the consecrations through Mary, the figure of St. Anthony Mary Claret also begins to find its adequate setting within it.

• **St. Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870)**

He was born in Catalonia, the northeastern corner of Spain, in a town called Sallent, on December 23, 1807, as a son of a small woollen manufacturer. He worked in the textile industry until he discerned his vocation to the priesthood. He entered the seminary at Vich in 1829, and was ordained at the age of 28 on 13 June, 1835. He

³³³ Chaminade, William Joseph, *Rule of life of the Society of Mary*, Section: 1.4-1.7, in: Loc. cit.

³³⁴ Cf., *A Common Bond*, in: *Chaminade and Art*, in: <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/chaminadeart.htm>, 13.06.13.

³³⁵ Benlloch, Eduardo, *Filial Devotion or Alliance with Mary?*, in: <http://www.nacms.org/files/Filial%20Devotion.pdf>, 13.06.13.

felt a missionary calling and entered the Jesuits in Rome. Since his health broke down, he was advised to return to Spain. He was engaged in missionary work throughout Catalonia and the Canaries. Pius IX at the request of the Spanish sovereign appointed him Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba in 1851. In 1857 the Queen of Spain, Isabella II requested him to be her personal Chaplain. He was also the restorer of the Escorial monastery. Several priests joined Claret and they together established the Congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 16 July, 1849, known today as the Claretians. Through the Congregation, he has powerfully influenced the Marian theology in Spain. His writings were mainly pastoral, devotional and catechetical.³³⁶ Article No. 20 of the 22nd General Chapter Document of the Claretian Congregation clearly highlights the Marian life style in the mission works. It says:

“Our prophetic lifestyle receives a distinctive imprint from the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of the Congregation. She teaches us that without heart, without tenderness, without love, there is no credible prophecy. Mary uttered the Word (cf. Lk 1:38) because she had first conceived it in her heart; she proclaimed her prophetic Magnificat (cf. Lk 1:46-55) because she had first believed; she stood near the Cross and was present at Pentecost because she was the good earth that welcomed the Word with a glad heart, made it bear fruit a hundred fold (cf. Lk 8:8,15,21) and asked others to do whatever the Word told them (Jn 2:5).”³³⁷

On December 3, 1836 Abbé Desgenettes at Our Lady of Victories in Paris launched the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This was a courageous response from him to the interior words which he heard telling him to consecrate his parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Since this consecration the inactive parish of Notre-Dame des Victories became overnight a vibrant centre for Christian faith and worship. This is considered as the birthplace of the devotion to the Heart of Mary under the specific title “*Immaculate*” Heart of Mary. During the

³³⁶ Cf., Macerlean, A. A., *Ven. Antonio María Claret y Clará*, in:

http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/c/claret_y_clara,ven_antonio_maria.html, 13.06.13, ; Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, op. cit., P. 103, ; Cf., Anderson, Gerald, H, (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999, P. 135.

³³⁷ Article No. 20, in: *In Prophetic Mission: Prophetic Dimension of our Missionary Service of the Word, Rome, 1997*, (Declaration of the XXII General Chapter of the Claretian Congregation), P. 10, in:

https://www.google.de/?gws_rd=ssl#q=In+Prophetic+Mission%2C+XXII+General+Chapter+Document+of+Claretian+Congregation, 13.06.13.

Nineteenth Century St. Anthony Mary Claret was instrumental in widely spreading this devotion.³³⁸

Claret had a strong devotion to the Heart of Mary and considered it as a most effective weapon in his manifold apostolate. He was not content with being called simply a Son of Mary, but he preferred to be called as the *Son of the Heart of Mary*. Claret was so impressed with what he read in the annals of the Archconfraternity, that he changed the name which he gave to his secular institute for women into *Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* and his congregation of missionaries into *Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, and would give the name as well to a congregation for Christian doctrine which he founded in Cuba. The Sonship in Mary's heart involves in the first place a precise kind of filial piety and it reaches its fulfillment only in the apostolate.³³⁹ Claret had written during his early priestly life his expression of entrustment to Mary with the following words: "*I entrust myself totally to Mary, as her son and priest.... Everything I do or suffer in my ministry will be done for her.*"³⁴⁰

Claret considered that a son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary should be an instrument in her struggle against satan.³⁴¹ Therefore we can understand that for him the consecration to Mary has got a strong apostolic character because just as the devil makes use of his seed which is wicked, so the Blessed Virgin makes use of the apostles whom she has chosen and formed to fight against the devil. Claret highlighted this point in his first sermon on the Heart of Mary, by showing how the Blessed Virgin has answered every new heresy through her special intervention, throughout the history of the Church. One such clear intervention for Claret was her manifestation of her Heart at the Church of Notre-Dame des Victories in Paris. This saint sees the mystery of Mary Immaculate more as a mystery of power than as a mystery of beauty.³⁴²

Though the members are expected to be the sons of her heart, and Mary is called upon as directress and above all as spiritual mother, the definition written by

³³⁸ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 67, ; Cf., *We consecrate ourselves to you forever O Hearts of Jesus and Mary*, in: <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/united-hearts/booklet-1.htm>, 13.06.13.

³³⁹ Cf., Lozano, John, M., *Mystic and Man of Action: St. Anthony Mary Claret*, translated by: Joseph Daries, C.M.F., Claretian Publication, 1977, P. 140.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., P. 141.

³⁴¹ Cf., Ibid., P. 140.

³⁴² Cf., Ibid., P. 135.

Claret in 1862 for the son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has got a strong Christological accent. The definition is as follows:

*“A Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a man on fire with love, who spreads its flames wherever he goes. He desires mightily and strives by all means possible to set everyone on fire with God’s love. Nothing daunts him: he delights in privations, welcomes work, embraces sacrifices, smiles at slander, rejoices in all the torments and sorrows he suffers, and glories in the cross of Jesus Christ. His only concern is how he may follow Christ and imitate him in praying, working, enduring and striving constantly and solely for the greater glory of God and the salvation of humankind.”*³⁴³

Claret later established a requirement for the Congregation of Missionaries: consecration to Mary as an essential part of the entrance ceremony to his congregation. If the Jesuit Father Nicolas Zucchi (+1670) was the greatest promoter of the famous consecration formula *“O My Mother and my Queen!”* during the Seventeenth Century, St. Claret was the key promoter of the same formula during the Nineteenth Century. The Marian Movement which was reborn during the second third of the Nineteenth Century started to grow speedily and the Marian current greatly increased during the first half of the Twentieth Century and even beyond that point.³⁴⁴

III.5.7. Marian Consecration during the Twentieth century

Fatima is to be considered as the most important Marian apparition of the Twentieth Century. The famous apparitions of the Virgin Mary to the children at Fatima occurred during World War I, in the summer of 1917 just as the Russian Revolution was unfolding. It was a crucial time of threat for the Church because of the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and the Russian revolution represented another stage in the “revolution” against the Church. In answer to the threat represented by these successive revolutions, Mary repeatedly appeared to the children and asked for repentance, a turning away from sin so that the forth coming disaster could be avoided. Her apparitions at Fatima have played a large part in the major Catholic renewals of recent centuries and in the most fundamental segment of the consecration movement. Many consecration movements emerged out of the revelations at Fatima. Therefore at this part of our discussion it is

³⁴³ Njayarkulam, Cyriac, *Work and Suffer for Jesus Christ: A Study on the Presence of Jesus Christ in the Apostolic Spirituality of St. Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870)*, Claretian Publication, 1984, P. 91.

³⁴⁴ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 62-63.

necessary to consider the impact of the revelations at Fatima on the devotion of the consecration to Mary. A thorough consideration of the history will not be attempted here due to its complicated nature. Instead by briefing the history I would focus my discussion mainly on how the revelations contributed to the leading movements for the devotion of consecration to Mary.³⁴⁵

- **The Apparitions at Fatima and its Impact on Marian Consecration**

On Sunday, 13th May 1917, Lucia, aged ten, accompanied by her two cousins, Francisco, aged nine and Jacinta Martos, aged seven, went to tend her parents' flock in the Cova da Iria, a kind of valley more than a mile distant from the Portuguese village of Fatima, the children's home. The inhabitants of this tiny village in the Diocese of Leiria (Portugal) were poor people. Many of them were small farmers and the children were entrusted the task of herding the sheep. Already in summer of 1916, a year before Our Lady appeared to them, the children saw three angelic apparitions and the angel taught them a prayer to the Blessed Trinity. This could be considered as a preparation for the children to encounter the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this historical Sunday afternoon as they were playing near their flock, they suddenly saw a flash of lightning in the clear sky. They ran for shelter to a tree and then there was another flash of lightning for the second time. While they were running to another tree the two girls suddenly stopped, because they saw a beautiful lady standing over the trees of the Cova da Iria. The "Lady" told them not to be afraid, and when Lucia asked her where she came from she replied: "From heaven". She further told the children that she wished them to come to the same place on the 13th of each month for the next six months and she promised them that she will reveal them who she is, what she wants and also assured them that she will come back there for the seventh time too. On 13 June about sixty people went to the Cova. The "Lady" told Lucia to learn to read and promised the curing of a sick man. On 13 July the crowds who went to the Cova had increased to between two and three thousand. Lucia asked the "Lady" to work a miracle but she only repeated her demand that the children should come to the same place each thirteenth of the month. She once again assured that in October she would tell them who she was and what she wanted. In the meantime they should say the Rosary every day in honour of Our

³⁴⁵ Cf., Foley, Donal, *Marian Movements in the Twentieth century*, written on Sunday, 30 September 2012, in: <http://militiasanctaemariae.blogspot.de/2012/09/marian-movements-in-twentieth-century.html>, 13.06.13.

Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace. She taught them a prayer, which she told them to add after each decade: *“My Jesus, forgive us; save us from the fire of hell; raise all souls to heaven, especially those who need it most”*. Suddenly during the vision Lucia cried out in terror. Lucia described at a later stage that it was the moment where she saw a vision of hell. On 13 August the local administrator, Arturo de Oliveira Santos, an atheist, put the children in prison for a night and terrorized them with threats of frying them in boiling oil. But in spite of his threats the children insisted that their story was true. He released them after two days. On 19 August the children went to a place called Valhinhos, and there the lady appeared unexpectedly. She said that she would work a miracle on 13 October, but it would be less impressive than originally planned, because of the kidnapping of the children. On 13th of September the “Lady” requested the people to recite the Rosary so that the World War I may end. She had promised to some that on 13 October she would appear with St. Joseph and the Holy Child, and soon afterwards there would be peace.³⁴⁶

October is the month specially dedicated to the Rosary in popular Catholic devotion and 7th October is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. It was during the October apparition that the lady identified herself as ‘Our Lady of the Rosary’. In the morning of 13 October there were about seventy thousand people at the Cova and there was a heavy pouring of rain and they all stood with wet clothes and umbrellas. There was a great excitement in the crowd. It was reported by Canon Formigao that thousands went down on their knees, weeping and praying to the Queen of Heaven for her motherly protection. The lady appeared, revealing to Lucia that she was the lady of the Rosary. She also said that the war was ending that day and the soldiers would soon return home. Then the lady disappeared.³⁴⁷ What was most remarkable about the October apparition was that, on that day a celestial phenomenon also took place:

“Suddenly Lucia cried out: “Look at the sun!,” where she claimed to see successively our Lady of Sorrows, our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Joseph with the Holy Child and our Lord (....) By this time the rain had stopped, and when the crowds obeyed Lucia’s demand and looked into the sun they saw various phenomena

³⁴⁶ Cf., Holstein, *Fatima (Portugal)*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 146-147, ; Cf., Graef, Hilda, *Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 386-388.

³⁴⁷ Cf., Boss, Sarah, Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, op. cit., P. 421, ; Cf., Graef, Hilda, *Mary*, op. cit., P. 388.

which have been described in different ways: the sun rotated three times, giving out multi-coloured rays; it seemed to approach the earth, a red light was seen and there was an intense heat; it zigzagged from east to west; it appeared to fall from the sky; later it zigzagged up again."³⁴⁸

The entire celestial miracle lasted for more than ten minutes, before the sun seemed to return to the sky. It was a miracle to experience that after the dance of the sun everyone's clothes and umbrellas, and the ground around them, were completely dry. Some years later, Lucia had a vision where she saw the Virgin accompanied by a child and she was holding her own heart surrounded by thorns. The child who accompanied the Virgin told Lucia that the thorns were placed there by ungrateful people. The child said to her that there was no one to make the reparation that would remove the thorns and he requested Lucia to have compassion on her Holy Mother's heart and to make reparation. He then indicated a series of devotions to be undertaken on the first Saturdays of five consecutive months. The devotions consisted mainly of confession, reception of Holy Communion and recitation of the Rosary.³⁴⁹ The ecclesiastical authorities approved the apparitions at Fatima, but it was done rather slowly. In 1919 Francisco died during an influenza epidemic and in 1920 Jacinta. In 1922 an Episcopal Commission began the canonical enquiry into the phenomena of Fatima and the commission finished its report in 1929, and in the following year the bishop proclaimed the apparitions to be worthy of belief.³⁵⁰

After the apparitions at Fatima for the first time in the year 1929 Lucia formally and explicitly reported that Our Lady has asked for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart by the Pope, in order to bring about its conversion. She also indicated that this request was first pronounced on July 13, 1917.³⁵¹ As recorded in Sister Lucy's memoirs, the second part of the Secret is as follows:

"You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end: but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the Pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that he is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of

³⁴⁸ Graef, Hilda, *Mary*, Loc. cit.

³⁴⁹ Cf., Boss, Sarah, Jane, Loc. cit.

³⁵⁰ Cf., Id.

³⁵¹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 70-71.

*war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father. To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated. **In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.** The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she shall be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world”³⁵²*

In the year 1937, the Bishop of Leiria communicated to the pope the requests of Lucia in the following terms:

*“According to a celestial revelation, God has promised to bring an end to the persecution in Russia if Your Holiness will deign to make and to ask equally of all the bishops of the Catholic world to make a solemn and public act of **reparation and consecration** of Russia to the most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and if you will also deign to approve and ask for the practice of devotions of reparation . . . on five Saturdays.”³⁵³*

But Pope Pius XI put aside the pressure upon the supreme Magisterium of the Church to act on the basis of a private revelation and he did not accede to this request. Again in the year 1940 on October 24, 1940, Lucia drafted a letter to Pope Pius XII with the agreement of her spiritual director.³⁵⁴ The edited and corrected letter reads as follows:

“If Your Holiness would deign to make the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, making special mention of Russia, and would order at the same time that in union with Your Holiness all the bishops should also make it [this last clause was added in the edited and corrected letter], the days would be shortened by which God has decided to punish the nations for their crimes through war, famine, and persecutions against the Church and against Your Holiness.”³⁵⁵

Pope Pius XII who had been ordained a bishop on October 13, 1917, the day of the final apparition at Fatima and of the miracle of the sun was struck by this

³⁵² *The Message of Fatima*, in:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html, 18.06.13. (My emphasis)

³⁵³ *Letter of 1937*, published by A. M. Martins, *Fatima et le Coeur de Marie* [Paris: Tequi, 1986], pp. 65-66, as cited in: Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 71.

³⁵⁴ Cf., Laurentin, René, Loc. cit.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Pp. 71-72.

coincidence to a great extent and he made the requested consecration on October 31, 1942. He sent a radio message to thousands of pilgrims who had come to Fatima on October 13, 1942, to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closing apparition of Our Lady. He consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary after exhorting them to thanksgiving, fidelity and Prayer.³⁵⁶ He consecrated the world in these words:

*“To you, and to your Immaculate Heart, Mary,...in this tragic hour of human history, we confide, commit, and consecrate not only the Holy Church, but the entire world...to peoples separated by error or discord, particularly those who profess a singular devotion to you, among whom there currently exists no house to honor your true Image and icon (which today is hidden to await better days), give peace.”*³⁵⁷

The reason why this consecration did not mention Russia by name was that it would have been politically unwise to do so during the crisis of the world war. He repeated the consecration in St. Peter’s Basilica on December 8, 1942, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. But Lucia said on May 4th, 1943 that the formulas employed by Pius XII were insufficient for the fulfillment of the promise. Ten years later, on July 7, 1952, Pope Pius XII issued the Encyclical *Sacro Vergente Anno*, addressed to the Russians. In his encyclical he dedicated and consecrated “all the peoples of Russia to that same Immaculate Heart.” Lucia again said that she was distressed because the consecration was not done in the way Our Lady asked for it. The reason for telling this was that the pope had not made the consecration “in union with all the bishops”, in accordance with the request of Our Lady during the apparition of the Trinity at the convent at Tuy on June 1929.³⁵⁸ In her letter to Fr. Gonzalves she writes:

*“If I am not mistaken, Our Lord God promises to end the persecution of Russia, if the Holy Father condescends to make, and likewise ordains the Bishops of the Catholic World to make, a solemn and public act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. In response to the ending of this persecution, His Holiness is to promise to Approve of and recommend the practice of the already mentioned devotion of reparation.”*³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ Cf., Rum, A., *Fatima and the Popes*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 148.

³⁵⁷ Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 72.

³⁵⁸ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 72-73.

³⁵⁹ Foley, Donal, A., *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World*, Gracewing Publishing, 2002, P. 353.

The pope took note of this and decided to renew the consecration for a fourth time. This time he ordered all the bishops ‘to renew’ the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on May 31, 1949, on the Feast of the Queenship of Mary. The pope had explicitly linked together all four of these consecrations because of his firm opinion that what applied to one, applied to all and hence Russia was not explicitly mentioned in the consecration prayer. Lucia continued with her dissatisfaction because according to her all these consecrations and their renewals were not carried out in the way the Blessed Mother wanted.³⁶⁰

At the Second Vatican Council, the bishops of Portugal and Italy proposed a consecration of the Church and of the world to the Immaculate Heart, to fulfill the request of Our Lady at Fatima. The Polish Bishops requested a consecration in accordance with the line of Montfort. Both these currents vary in different aspects. Interestingly no opposition or competition came up at the Council and nothing was said in view of Russia. On November 21, 1964, in the closing discourse to the third session of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI spoke to all the assembled bishops at the Second Vatican Council. Pope Paul VI did not take advantage of the assembly at Vatican II of all the bishops of the world in order to carry out the request of Lucia. He limited himself instead merely to recalling the consecration that had been made by Pope Pius XII in 1942. He neither completed nor renewed the act of Pope Pius XII. He did not invite the College of Bishops then gathered around him to pronounce along with him the formula of consecration. He simply limited himself to recalling the act of his predecessor.³⁶¹ After recalling the prayer of his predecessor, he pronounced his own prayer to Our Lady with the following words:

*“O Mary, while acknowledging Jesus Christ as the one true Savior, we entrust the whole human race to your Immaculate Heart. Deliver mankind from the scourges deserved for its sins, grant peace to all the world; a peace founded on truth, on justice, on freedom and on love.”*³⁶²

There was neither applause nor any particular manifestation at all at the moment when he recalled the consecration of his predecessor. As per the canonists it was seen only as a personal act of the pope at the Council. But for Lucia it was a backward step in the entire proceeding due to the lack of mentioning of Russia and

³⁶⁰ Cf., Id., Pp. 73-74.

³⁶¹ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 77-80.

³⁶² Hardon, John A., *The History of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, in: http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Mariology/Mariology_014.htm, 18.06.13.

due to the missing of the College of the Bishops in the renewal act.³⁶³ At this point one can ask why the consecration of Russia was such an important theme for Lucia? It is because during the middle of 1930, Sr. Lucia asked Jesus why it was necessary that Russia be consecrated to Mary's Immaculate Heart. Jesus replied to her in the following words:

*"Because I want my whole Church to acknowledge that consecration as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that it may extend its cult later on, and put devotion to this Immaculate Heart beside the devotion to my Sacred Heart."*³⁶⁴

After the attempt on his life that took place on May 13, 1981 as Pope John Paul II was laying on his bed in Gemelli Hospital, his old childhood friend, Doctor Wanda Poltawska read for him the major texts of Fatima. This inspired him to re-examine the Fatima consecration³⁶⁵. He apparently reviewed all the documents on Fatima and felt for certain that Mary's intercession had saved his life, and his reading apparently convinced him that the consecration of Russia to Immaculate Heart was an absolute necessity if the world was to be saved from war and atheism. On 13 May 1982, exactly a year after the assassination attempt Pope John Paul II went to Fatima in order to thank Mary for saving his life, and also to carry out a public act of consecration of the whole world, including Russia, to her Immaculate Heart.

*"Interestingly, in this 1982 consecration, John Paul II specially described Fatima as a place "chosen" by Mary, thus indicating official confirmation of its status and intimating that we are to understand it as the major "prophecy" of the Twentieth Century."*³⁶⁶

During his homily the Pope spoke of Fatima in these significant terms:

*"The appeal of the Lady of the message of Fatima is so deeply rooted in the Gospel and the whole of Tradition that Church feels that the message imposes a commitment on her."*³⁶⁷

On October 16, 1983, during the Mass concelebrated with the Fathers of the Synod, Pope John Paul II renewed the consecration by repeating the same terms, which he had employed at Fatima in order to give the act precisely the collegial dimension desired by Lucia. On March 24, 1984, on the feast of the Annunciation of

³⁶³ Cf., Id., P. 81.

³⁶⁴ Foley, Donal, A., *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World*, op. cit., P. 353.

³⁶⁵ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 81.

³⁶⁶ Id., P. 350.

³⁶⁷ Tindal-Robertson, *Fatima, Russia and Pope John Paul II*, p. 248, as cited in: Ibid., P. 351.

that year, while March 25 was a Sunday in lent, John Paul II again solemnly renewed the same consecration³⁶⁸ in following words:

*“O Mother of all men and women, and of all peoples, you who know all their sufferings and their hopes, you who have a mother’s awareness of all the struggles between good and evil, between light and darkness, which afflict the modern world, accept the cry which we, moved by the Holy Spirit, address directly to your Heart. Embrace with the love of the Mother and Handmaid of the Lord, this human world of ours, which we entrust and consecrate to you, for we are full of concern for the earthly and eternal destiny of individuals and peoples. In a special way we entrust and consecrate to you those individuals and nations which particularly need to be thus entrusted and consecrated. (...) In entrusting to you, O Mother, the world, all individuals and peoples, we also entrust to you this very consecration of the world, placing it in your motherly Heart. Immaculate Heart! Help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths towards the future!... Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer all sin: individual sin and the ‘sin of the world’, sin in all its manifestations. Let there be revealed, once more, in the history of the world the infinite saving power of the Redemption: the power of merciful Love! May it put a stop to evil! May it transform consciences! May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of Hope!”*³⁶⁹

The popes (Pius XII, Paul VI and John Paul II) renewed this consecration no less than eight times. It is indeed an amazing fact to know that in the entire history of the Church the popes had gone so far in obedience to the requests made through a private revelation. In a letter addressed to Sister Mary of Bethlehem on August 29, 1989, Lucia finally declared that the final consecration made by the Pope on March 24, 1984, in union with the Bishops of the world, was both sufficient and efficacious.³⁷⁰ She wrote the following words:

“Afterward this same sovereign pontiff wrote to all the bishops of the world asking them to unite themselves to him. (...) Then publicly, in union with those bishops who wished to associate themselves with His Holiness, he made the consecration in the way in which the Blessed Virgin had wished that it should be made.

³⁶⁸ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 82.

³⁶⁹ 1984 Collegial Consecration prayer of John Paul II to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in: <http://speramus-hope.blogspot.de/2009/11/1984-consecration-prayer-of-pope-john.html>, 18.06.13.

³⁷⁰ Cf., Id., Pp. 82-83.

Afterward people asked me if it was made in the way Our Lady wanted, and I replied, "Yes." From that time, it is made."³⁷¹

In response to the question from Fr. Fox Sr. Lucia produced another signed note on 3rd July, 1989, with the following words:

"If the consecration made by Pope John Paul II on March 25, 1984 in union with all the bishops of the world, accomplished the conditions for the conversion of Russia, according to the request of Our Lady in Tuy on June 13 of 1929"? Yes it was accomplished, and since then I have said that it was made. And I say that no other person responds for me, it is I who receive and open all letters and respond to them."³⁷²

As conclusion we can say that Mary's promise of Russia's conversion has been fulfilled. One cannot deny the fact that the consecration made by Pope John Paul II on March 24, 1984, had dramatic consequences. It led to the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union. It led to the birth of Glasnost and perestroika and the falling of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Communism had been unable to crush Christianity, despite exercising total control over it for more than eighty years. The protest against Communist rule brought the end of Warsaw Pact, in 1989. In May 1991, a decade after the assassination attempt, the Pope returned to Fatima to give thanks to Mary for the marvelous fruits of the 1984 consecration and for saving his life. He also warned that, although Marxism was losing its influence, there is a danger to Christian morality through Western materialism, which is also a form of atheism. From these massive changes in Russia and Eastern Europe we can understand that the consecration of 1984 was carried out largely in accordance with Mary's wishes, and all these facts mark the triumph of the Immaculate Heart. Many devotees of Fatima give the credit to Our Lady and the Pope for these terrific changes in the history of human beings.³⁷³

Marian consecration movements, through the support of many Popes flourished gloriously after the apparitions at Fatima during the Twentieth Century.

³⁷¹ *Letter from Lucia to Sister Mary of Bethlehem dated August 29, 1989, as cited in: Ibid., P. 87.*

³⁷² Martins and Fox, *Documents on Fatima*, P. 86. Sr. Lucia also wrote three letters to the journal *30 Days* in which she confirmed that the collegial consecration had been accomplished, see also Tindal-Robertson, *Fatima, Russia and Pope John Paul II*, p. 27, cited in: Foley, Donal, A., *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World*, op. cit., P. 354.

³⁷³ Cf., Boss, Sarah, Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, op. cit., P. 423, ; Cf., Foley, Donal, A., *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World*, op. cit., P. 361.

The messages of Fatima created deep impact on many founders of Marian religious congregations. Among them are the Ven. Mother Mary Potter (+1913), the Polish religious Franciscan St. Maximillian-Maria Kolbe (+1941), the Servant of God Frank Duff (+1980), Bl. Edouard Poppe (+1924), Bl. Dina Bélanger (+1929) and the Servant of God Marthe Robin (+1981).³⁷⁴ It would take us beyond our scope to discuss in detail all the modern Congregations in which the Marian Consecration has been considered as the integral part of their charism. And hence we will discuss only about those movements and organizations, which were the reason for spreading the Marian Consecration among the faithful like wildfire.

- **Militia of the Immaculata**

The concept of Marian Consecration as preparing oneself to be the soldier of Christ in the battle along with Mary, to fight against the powers of darkness and evil, which were becoming stronger during the Twentieth Century. One of the striking personalities who incarnated this ideal of soldier is **St. Maximillian-Maria Kolbe (1894-1941)**. This Polish religious, a Franciscan Conventual, an apostle and theologian of the Immaculate Conception founded in Rome in 1917 the *Militia Immaculatae* (Mission of the Immaculate). On October 16, 1917, three days after the final apparition of Our Lady of Fatima and a few months before his priestly ordination, this great Franciscan Saint and Auschwitz Hero founded the *Militia Immaculatae* as a direct response to the Masonic demonstrations held at St. Peter's Square. They were demonstrations held against the Vatican and especially against the Pope.³⁷⁵ Already as a young seminarian St. Maximillian felt an inner urge to enter into battle in the service of Our Lady.

*“Bowing his face to the floor before the altar of the Immaculate during Mass one day he promised her that he would fight for her. Although at that time he did not know how he was to do this, he thought of his “battle” as a material and bloody one. The military life and career, for which he had an obvious inclination, appeared to him to be in perfect harmony with that of a knight devoted to his Lady.”*³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 743.

³⁷⁵ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 69, ; Cf., Manteau, H.M., - Bonamy, St. Maximillian Kolbe (1894-1941), in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 447.

³⁷⁶ Antonio Ricciardi, O.F.M. Conv., *St. Maximillian Kolbe: Apostle of Our Difficult Age*, trans. Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1982), 27, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 69.

Two things should be pointed out here. (1) The combative, militant language applied to spiritual warfare has got biblical roots. It goes back to St. Paul (Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7-, Eph 6:10-18; 2 Tim 2:5).³⁷⁷ (2) St. Maximilian's understanding of Marian Consecration was not a direct result of the influence of Montfort and it is surely not in conflict with Montfort's understanding because:

*"St. Maximilian Kolbe discovered Montfort's True Devotion only after he had been led to the necessity of Marian consecration through his immersion in the great Franciscan Marian tradition."*³⁷⁸

But he was very aware of standing in the great tradition of Marian slavery. He did not use this word as frequently as Montfort but its implications can be seen very clearly in the following texts.³⁷⁹

"You belong to her as her own property. Let her do with you what she wishes. Do not let her feel herself bound by any restrictions following from the obligations a mother has towards her own son. Be hers, her property; let her make free use of you and dispose of you without any limits, for whatever purpose she wishes.

Let her be your owner, your Lady and absolute Queen. A servant sells his labor; you, on the contrary, offer yours as a gift: your fatigue, your suffering, all that is yours. Beg her not to pay attention to your free will, but to act towards you always and in full liberty, as she desires.

Be her son, her servant, her slave of love, in every way and under whatever formulation yet devised or which can be devised now or in the future. In a word, be all hers.

Be her soldier so that others may become ever more perfectly hers, like you yourself, and even more than you; so that all those who live and will live all over the world may work together with her in her struggle against the infernal serpent.

*Belong to the Immaculate so that your conscience, becoming ever purer, may be purified still more, become immaculate as she is for Jesus, so that you too may become a mother and conqueror of hearts for her."*³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 64.

³⁷⁸ Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 744.

³⁷⁹ Cf., Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Scritti di Massimiliano Kolbe (Rome: Editrice Nazionale Milizia dell' Immacolata, 1997) 1334 [Anselm W. Romb, O.F.M. Conv., *The Kolbe Reader* (Libertyville, IL: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1987) 194], as cited in: Ibid., Pp. 744-745.

St. Maximilian Kolbe always regarded St. Francis of Assisi as his primary inspiration, but he may also have been inspired by the consecration of the Franciscan Order, which took place in 1908. He drew the concrete form in the act of consecration to the Immaculata essentially from four principal sources.³⁸¹ They are:

“1. The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, who was the founder of the Franciscan Order, to which St. Maximilian belonged. Kolbe considered this prayer to be a veritable act of consecration in and of itself (SK 737).

2. The oblation of the Marian association (MI), which did not present itself as a formal consecration. Kolbe specified this by making a triple reference to the Sacred Heart (SK 207) and to the Immaculata (SK 208), and also by the militancy of his Militia.

*3. The filial giving of oneself to Mary according to Chaminade, as expounded by Emile Neubert (in **Mon idéal Jesus, Fils de Marie** [(My ideal, Jesus, Son of Mary)], SK 631).*

4. Finally, St. Maximilian included in his own consecration the formula of Grignon de Montfort, which he believed to be in entire conformity with the Spirit of the Militia of the Immaculata (SK 508). “It is truly ours”, he said (SK 282).”³⁸²

The Mariology of St. Maximilian is centered on the Theme “Immaculata”. His teaching is based on the self revelation of Our Lady in Lourdes, where she said to Bernadette her name: “*I am the Immaculate Conception.*” St. Maximilian points out to the fact that at Lourdes Mary did not say, “*I am the one who was conceived immaculate*” rather she said “*I am the Immaculate Conception.*” According to him only God can designate Himself as such. If Mary names herself in the fashion that belongs to God alone, it only shows that she stands as pure transference of the Holy Spirit. Mary owes to the Holy Spirit for the fact of being immaculate in her conception. St. Maximilian concludes that due to the bond between Mary and the Holy Spirit, consecrating oneself to the Immaculate is consecrating oneself entirely to the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all gifts.³⁸³ “*This perfect union of the Immaculate one with the Holy Spirit makes her in a certain manner, the Holy Spirit himself.*”³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 64-65.

³⁸² Ibid., P. 65.

³⁸³ Cf., Manteau, H.M., - Bonamy, *St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 447-448.

³⁸⁴ Eph Mar, 21 (1971), 231-232, as cited in: O’Carroll, Michael, op. cit., P. 215.

The official Act of Consecration for the *Militia Immaculatae* clearly highlights the goal of St Maximillian. The main goal of his life was to mobilize an army, a militia completely at her disposal in order to support Mary to fight against the “infernal serpent” (cf. Gen. 3:15). The text of the Act of Consecration is as follows:

“O Immaculata, Queen of Heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, God has willed to entrust the entire order of mercy to you. I, N ... a repentant sinner, cast myself at your feet humbly imploring you to take me with all that I am and have, wholly to yourself as your possession and property. Please make of me, of all my powers of soul and body, of my whole life, death and eternity, whatever most pleases you.

If it pleases you, use all that I am and have without reserve, wholly to accomplish what was said of you: “She will crush your head,” and, “You alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world.” Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for introducing and increasing your glory to the maximum in all the many strayed and indifferent souls, and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. For wherever you enter you obtain the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through your hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.”³⁸⁵

St. Louis de Montfort and St Maximillian Kolbe both can be called as Apostles of Marian Consecration. They have had their genesis under different circumstances and each of them developed the spirituality of Marian consecration, in their own unique way. But it is very interesting to know that St. Maximillian criticized Grignon de Montfort. Laurentin says that St. Maximillian did not fundamentally oppose Montfort’s approach of Marian consecration but his intention was to correct, reorient, and improve on Grignon de Montfort’s approach. His criticism is based on three points: (1) According to St. Maximillian, Montfort did not speak of Mary conceived without sin and in his consecration he made reference to Mary as “the Mother of the Lord”. He also did not specify the fundamental privileges given to her by God. The intention of St. Maximilian was to correct that state of affairs by referring to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854. (2) The references to “slavery” by Montfort to express the gift of self

³⁸⁵ *Scritti* 37, 1331 [English version from Marytown, Libertyville, IL]. On the consecration proposed by Saint Maximilian cf. Apollonio, *MF* 192-195; Peter Damian Fehlner, F.I., *St. Maximilian M. Kolbe, Martyr of Charity, Pneumatologist: His Theology of the Holy Spirit* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2004) 143-145, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., Pp. 745-746.

were not liked by St. Maximilian, and hence he tried to use other ways of expressing it. (3) Finally, St Maximillian wished to give a militant dimension to the concept of consecration in an explicit manner.³⁸⁶ He himself summed up these differences as follows:

*“The Militia of the Immaculata must be distinguished from Blessed Grignon de Montfort; this is particularly the case because the Militia has not only the Franciscan idea behind it; it has also the dogma of the Immaculate Conception behind it, with all the theoretical and practical consequences that flow from these things. Further, the Militia has as its universal aim the sanctification of everyone; it includes the universal mediation of the Immaculata for that purpose, and to win the whole world for the Immaculata (SK 796).”*³⁸⁷

This contribution made by St. Maximilian Kolbe has been evaluated by theologians in various ways. Stefano de Fiores analyzed all this with the greatest precision, using historical and anthropological criteria. He says that both Grignon de Montfort and Kolbe were highly original personalities of their time and hence one should not mix up their charism, culture, and formation with one another. However a comparative study would show not only their multiple diversities but also will manifest their profound similarities as well. This study would only point out the underlying fact that there existed a continuity of the Christian faith in both of the two different cultures in which they lived. The differences were really merely semantic and verbal. Montfort used the word slavery to express a gift of self that was radical, total and without any reservations. He used this word to underline the wholly radical nature of the gift, a total delivery of one into the hands of the other just as the master has the right of life and death over the slave. Kolbe substituted the word slavery with the other word soldier or being a fitting instrument in the immaculate and merciful hands of Mary. He did not like the notion of slave because, as a slave one has to renounce his condition as a free and responsible person. Both aimed to express in their original vocabularies a total resignation, which really amount to a dynamic commitment to their mission. Both Montfort and St. Maximilian shared the same approach, the same concern, and the same motivation, with respect to the total gift of self in spite of their cultural differences. They represent two different and original expressions of the same total gift of self.³⁸⁸ For both of them the final goal of Marian

³⁸⁶ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 65-66.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., P. 66.

³⁸⁸ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 66-69.

Consecration is: “*always ultimately directed to a greater fidelity and love offered to our divine Lord and Redeemer in a renewal of our foundational baptismal vows to Jesus through Mary.*”³⁸⁹

St Maximilian founded *Niepokalanow*, the “City of the Immaculate,” a religious community, in Poland in 1927. From 1927 to 1941, he used the mass media (periodicals, newspapers, and radio) to show that consecration to the Immaculate was urgent for a world, which is troubled through every form of atheism. *Niepokalanow* grew to be the largest religious community in the world before World War II. Fr Maximilian went to Japan and founded a similar community at Nagasaki, in 1930. Before the Second World War began, he came back to Poland. He was eventually imprisoned in Auschwitz. There in Auschwitz, he wanted to bear witness as Servant of Mary to his teaching in every way including death. He wanted “to be ground to dust” for the Reign of Divine Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate. God heard his wish and he died a martyr’s death in 1941.³⁹⁰

- **The Legion of Mary**

One of the important Marian associations, which played a key role in spreading the devotion of the Marian consecration during this century, was the Legion of Mary, which was founded by Frank Duff. The specific influence of Montfort has been experienced, deepened and spread directly or indirectly through this Marian association. **Frank Duff (1889-1980)**, a government servant, who had a lot of experience in St. Vincent de Paul Conference work, founded the Legion of Mary together with a small group of lay people on September 7th, 1921 in Dublin in Ireland.³⁹¹ This is how it all began and came into existence:

A little group attended regularly the monthly Pioneer Council meeting in a modest ‘upper-room’ of Myra House, an apartment in an old and poor quarter of the city of Dublin. It was in these informal ‘talks’ after the meeting that the spirit, which characterized the Legion from its first meeting, was formed. In a consecutive number of these talks, Mr. Frank Duff had outlined to his listeners the True Devotion to Our Lady, as taught by Saint Louis Marie de Montfort in his Treatise. On the evening of September 7, 1921, on the feast day of Our Lady’s Nativity, a little group of ordinary

³⁸⁹ Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 163-164.

³⁹⁰ Cf., Manteau, H.M., - Bonamy, *St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 448, ; Cf., Foley, Donal, *Marian Movements in the Twentieth century*, op cit.

³⁹¹ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Thetokos*, op. cit., P. 125.

persons - fifteen girls, most of them in their late teens or early twenties together with Mr. Frank Duff, and one priest, Michael Toher were gathered for prayer. After their prayers they were discussing the topic of how one could please God in the best possible manner and how could one make Him loved in His world under the maternal watchfulness of Mary. The program of work was proposed in this little group, namely, to visit an almshouse of the city to console the forgotten poor and to bring them spiritual solace and relief. They wanted to organize it seriously and methodically. To accomplish their program of work they agreed to follow the rules of St. Vincent de Paul society by concentrating upon an apostolate with Mary, a service for Mary and a life with Mary, in accordance with the teachings of St. Louis de Montfort. This was how the new organization, the Legion of Mary has been born. This organization was known as *Association of Our Lady of Mercy* during the first four years. Later, in November 1925, it adopted the name: *Legion of Mary*.³⁹²

*“These first Legionaries understood their role in this soul-to-soul apostolate. They understood that they were to be mere docile instruments in the hands of the Virgin Mary. Their intention was clear-cut: self-sanctification through the sanctification of others. Their message was a precise one: to bring Christ into the world of souls through Mary’s all-powerful mediation.”*³⁹³

Beginning with Scotland in 1927, this association started to spread all over the world. It has been encouraged by every Pope since Pius XI and it presently exists in 1500 dioceses in all over the world. Marian idealism and the spiritual outlook inspired by Montfort are to be found in the *Handbook of the Legion of Mary*.³⁹⁴

The Legion of Mary requires from its members to lead a devout Christian life, to take part in the weekly meeting of prayer, to have a regular spiritual reading, to be instructed by a spiritual director and to allot at least two hours a week for apostolic engagements. The most effective practice used by the Legion in its apostolate is the practice of visiting the homes of people and encouraging Bible study, which is called Pilgrimage for Christ. It has a highly organized structure and it is patterned on divisions, which was common in Rome during ancient times. Frank Duff developed an extensive Latin terminology to describe all aspect of the work of the Legion, and indeed saw it as the spiritual counterpart of the ancient Roman Legions. The smallest

³⁹² Cf., Charest, Roger, M., *The Legion of Mary*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., Pp. 257-259.

³⁹³ Ibid., P. 259.

³⁹⁴ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 125.

unit is called *Praesidium*, two or more *Praesidia* clubbed together are called *Curia*, a regional governing body is called *Senatus* and the supreme governing body is called *Concilium*.³⁹⁵ The official Handbook of the Legion of Mary defines this movement and its objectives in clear terms.

*“The Legion of Mary is an Association of Catholics, who, with the sanction of the Church and under the powerful leadership of Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces . . . have formed themselves into a Legion for Service in the warfare which is perpetually waged by the Church against the world and its evil powers.”*³⁹⁶

*“The Legion is an army - the army of the Virgin most humble.”*³⁹⁷

*“Like any army, it is built on discipline, “unrelaxed discipline”, a discipline which is based on true humility.”*³⁹⁸

It must *“bear on all the affairs of daily life and be ever on the alert for opportunities to promote the general object of the Legion, namely, to destroy the empire of sin, uproot its foundations and plant on its ruins the Standard of Christ the king”*³⁹⁹

*“The object of the Legion of Mary is the sanctification of its members by prayer and active co-operation, under ecclesiastical guidance, in Mary's and the Church's work of crushing the head of the serpent and advancing the reign of Christ.”*⁴⁰⁰

The principal task of the Legionary is to bring Mary to the world in order to win the world to Jesus. This task of the Legionary obviously invites each member to seek union with Mary through imitation of her virtues and showing complete dependence upon her.⁴⁰¹

*“This union with Mary and imitation of her virtues will inevitably lead to an apostolate which is essentially Marian, i.e., an apostolate through which in every person Christ will be seen, will be tended to and cared for with the love of Mary herself.”*⁴⁰²

The Legion remains essentially Marian and apostolic. But the spirituality of the Legion is centered on the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier. The Holy Spirit both for the sanctification of its members and for their apostolic action must therefore, animate it.

³⁹⁵ Cf., Bueno, A., *Legion of Mary*, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 251.

³⁹⁶ H. E. Riberi, as quoted in Official Handbook of The Legion of Mary, 6th American ed. (Louisville, Ky., 1953), Pp. 1-2, (from here on will be abbreviated as *Handbook*), as cited in: Charest, Roger, M., *The Legion of Mary*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., P. 257.

³⁹⁷ *Handbook*, P. 98, as cited in: Charest, Roger, op. cit., P. 259.

³⁹⁸ Charest, Roger, op. cit., P. 259.

³⁹⁹ *Handbook*, P. 160, as cited in: Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ *Handbook*, P.4, as cited in: Ibid., P.261.

⁴⁰¹ Cf., Charest, Roger, op. cit., P. 262.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

This is the reason why every meeting of the Legion is opened with a prayer to the Holy Spirit. In order to serve Christ and to continue His mission on earth the Legionary is asked to submit himself to the action of the Holy Spirit in and through Mary. And this manifests the Marian outlook of the Legion. The legion is built upon devotion to Mary. It has already been mentioned that the members of the Legion seek union with Mary by way of imitating her virtues. In imitating her virtues the Legion seeks to identify itself with Mary, particularly in her motherhood of souls, because without participating in her motherhood of souls there can be no real union with her.⁴⁰³ The Legion Handbook says:

“On the day of the Annunciation she entered on her wondrous work and ever since she has been the busy mother attending to her household duties. For a while these were contained in Nazareth, but soon the little house became the whole wide world, and her Son expanded into mankind. And so it has continued: all the time her domestic work goes on and nothing in that Nazareth-grown-big can be performed without her. Any caring of the Lord’s body is only supplemental to her care; the apostle only adds himself to her maternal occupations; and in that Sense, Our Lady might declare: ‘I am Apostleship’, almost as she said: ‘I am the Immaculate Conception’.”⁴⁰⁴

“True devotion to Mary must comprise the Service of souls. Mary without motherhood and the Christian without apostleship would be analogous ideas. Both the one and the other would be incomplete, unreal, unsubstantial, false to the divine Intention.”⁴⁰⁵

To understand the spirituality of the Legion of Mary one must grasp the spiritual bond that links the Legion to the teacher of Marian Mediation, St. Louis Marie de Montfort. Frank Duff himself attests to that the Legion spirituality owes much to St. Louis De Montfort’s writings.⁴⁰⁶ The founder of the Legion says: *“The Legion of Mary owes, you might say, everything to the Montfort devotion.”⁴⁰⁷*

The following extracts from the Handbook of the Legion will illustrate us how the Legion of Mary strives to identify itself, with the Montfort way of spiritual life.

⁴⁰³ Cf., Ibid, Pp. 263-264.

⁴⁰⁴ *Handbook*, P. 137, as cited in: Ibid., P. 264.

⁴⁰⁵ *Handbook*, P. 137, as cited in: Ibid., P. 265.

⁴⁰⁶ Cf., Charest, Roger, op. cit., P. 265.

⁴⁰⁷ F. Duff, in his talk to the Montfort Fathers in Bay Shore, N. Y., on December 6, 1956. Cf. *Queen of All Hearts*, Vol. 7, March-April, 1957, P- 3, as cited in: Charest, Roger, Loc. cit.

*“It is desirable that the practice of the Legionary devotion to Mary should be rounded off and given the distinctive character which has been taught by St. Louis De Montfort under the titles of ‘The True Devotion’ or the ‘Slavery of Mary’ and which is enshrined in his two books, the **True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin** and the **Secret of Mary**. ”*⁴⁰⁸

*“That devotion requires the formal entry into a compact with Mary, whereby one gives to her one’s whole self, with all its thoughts, and deeds and possessions, both spiritual and temporal, pass, present and future, without the reservation of the smallest part or slightest little thing. In a word, the giver places himself in a condition equivalent to that of a slave possessing nothing of his own, and wholly dependent on, and utterly at the disposal of Mary.”*⁴⁰⁹

The total consecration to Mary is understood by the Legion not just as a passing act of devotion to Mary. But it upholds that *“it consists principally in the subsequent living of that consecration. The True Devotion must represent not an act but a state.”*⁴¹⁰

Thus we see that the Marian spirituality of the Legion of Mary is a spirituality that is totally Marian, totally Montfortian. In this spirituality the actual making of the act of consecration known as Holy Slavery is not enjoined as an obligation rather it is left to the free choice of each Legionary.⁴¹¹ The annual consecration of the legionaries to Mary is called the *Acies*. It is one of the Legion’s most effective practices for individual growth in holiness.⁴¹² In its own words:

*“The essential idea of the Legion...is that of **working in union with and in dependence on Mary, its Queen**. The ‘Acies’ is the solemn declaration of that union and dependence, the renewal-individual and collective-of the legionary promise of fealty.”*⁴¹³

According to Laurentin the Legion of Mary brings out the two important and neglected elements of Montfort’s consecration, namely:

“From the theoretical perspective: stress on a fundamental and active recourse to the Holy Spirit; from the practical perspective:

⁴⁰⁸ *Handbook*, P. 142, as cited in: Charest, Roger, op. cit., P. 266.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ Cf., Charest, Roger, op. cit., P. 267.

⁴¹² Cf., Buono, A., *Legion of Mary*, op. cit., P. 251.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

emphasis on active charity, visits to the poor and sick and evangelization.”⁴¹⁴

As conclusion we can say that Legion of Mary is a spiritual organization of Catholic action, which has successfully linked its apostolate with the devotion to Mary, by identifying itself with Mary in her essential function of taking care of the souls with a motherly care. In the words of Frank Duff we can say: “*the Legion is Our Lady’s spirit come to life in people.*”⁴¹⁵

• The World Apostolate of Fatima

The World Apostolate of Fatima, which was formerly called the Blue Army, was founded jointly by John Haffert and Mgr Harold Colgan in the United States. The history of its foundation is as follows:

Harold V. Colgan was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey on November 27, 1894. He was ordained as a priest in 1920 and became the Pastor of St. Mary’s Church in Plainfield in 1946. In the same year he started experiencing a serious heart sickness which resulted in a heart attack in the first week of December and was hospitalized. It was informed to him that his survival chances are very less. Being aware of this fact he requested a statue of Mary to be brought into his room. On December 8th on the feast day of the Immaculate Conception, he prayed and promised Our Lady that if he survives and if his lifespan was extended he would do everything to spread her devotion among the people. Miraculously he was healed very soon and started to work again at St. Mary’s Church fulfilling his duties as Pastor. Father Colgan was struck with wonder when he read a magazine article about Our Lady’s appearance in Fatima, in 1917, which was not well known in the United States at that time. He was touched by the words of Mary, where she stated: “...Russia will be converted...” This was the fundamental inspiration for Father Colgan, which motivated him to found a Marian organization known as the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima.⁴¹⁶ The reason behind that is:

“Since the “Cold War” with the militantly atheistic Communists and their Red Army in the Soviet Union (formerly Russia) was starting to occur after the Second World War, he told his parishioners that he wanted to start devotions specifically to Our

⁴¹⁴ Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 64.

⁴¹⁵ F. Duff, Address to the New York Senatus, Dec., 1956, p. 2 (mimeo), as cited in: Charest, Roger, op. cit., P. 257.

⁴¹⁶ Cf., *Our Founders & History*, in: <http://wafusa.org/about-us/our-founders-history/>, 05.06.14.

*Lady of Fatima. He preached from the altar that he wanted to start a "Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima" that would be a spiritual force against the atheistic policies of the Soviet Union and their Red Army".*⁴¹⁷

Colgan came in contact with John Haffert, who was also a New Jersey resident and began to collaborate with him. John M. Haffert was also the founder of a Scapular Society, a society devoted to promoting the Brown Scapular. He had developed a Pledge Card based on the Fatima message after meeting Sr Lucia, the only surviving Fatima seer. This Pledge involved saying the Morning Offering, wearing the Scapular, and praying the Rosary every day. The Pledge also included the Five First Saturday devotions, which was optional at the initial stage and which became mandatory later on. Colgan began to collaborate with him and invited John to speak to his parishioners and tell them about Our Lady of Fatima and the Pledge. In a matter of short time the Pledge became known as the Blue Army Pledge. The pledge was the main focus of this Marian organization and it soon started to spread throughout USA and then around the world. It became a worldwide movement known as the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima. The name of the organisation was changed to the World Apostolate of Fatima after the collapse of Communism in the former Soviet Union. It is estimated that 30 to 40 million people have signed this Pledge to Our Lady, which shows the rapid growth of the movement.⁴¹⁸

Pope Pius XII granted in 1954 Father Colgan the title Monsignor. Msgr. Colgan bought a property later on directly behind the Fatima Shrine and built on this property a hotel with two chapels, a Latin rite and Byzantine rite and named them "Domus Pacis", meaning House of Peace. John Haffert helped Msgr Colgan in a tremendous manner to build Domus Pacis and also started Blue Army Tours to take pilgrims to Fatima and other religious sites. In April 1972 Msgr. Harold V. Colgan passed away. He had lived for another 26 years after praying for an extension of his life.⁴¹⁹

The World Apostolate of Fatima is a movement, which responds to the following requests made by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima, Portugal in 1917:

"Through three small shepherd children Our Lady spoke to the world,

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Cf., Ibid. ; Cf., Foley, Donal, *Marian Movements in the Twentieth century*, op. cit.

⁴¹⁹ Cf., Ibid.

“Do not offend the Lord our God anymore, because He is already so much offended.”

She showed them a vision of hell where the souls of poor sinners go and said, “To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.”

Our Lady warned of coming tragic world events if Her message was ignored: “To prevent this”, She asked for, “the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays.”

She requested the daily Rosary for world peace to draw us to personal conversion and to: “Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and to pray for them.”

The Child Jesus later appeared to Sr. Lucia and requested reparation on five consecutive first Saturdays for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Jesus said He desired us, “...to place the devotion to this Immaculate Heart alongside the devotion to My Sacred Heart.”⁴²⁰

The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima officially became The World Apostolate of Fatima. Pope Benedict XVI on October 7, 2005 named it as a Public International Association of the Faithful for an “experimental” period. Five years later, on October 7, 2010, the “experimental” period came to an end and the Public International Association of the Faithful came under the responsibility of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.⁴²¹ The Pontifical Council for the Laity decreed the following:

“1. The confirmation of the erection of the apostolate as a Public International Association of the Faithful ; and 2. The definitive approbation of the Statutes of the association, duly authenticated and deposited in its Archives.”⁴²²

This status of the Pontifical Council for the Laity means:

“The World Apostolate can speak authoritatively and officially on behalf of the Church about the message of Fatima, which is focused on personal conversion, the Rosary, and the bringing of peace to the world. This will come about through people making reparation for sin, living the Gospel message, and practicing devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”⁴²³

⁴²⁰ What is the World Apostolate of Fatima?, in: <http://www.wafpdx.org/>, 18.06.13.

⁴²¹ Cf., *Our Founders & History*, op. cit.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Foley, Donal, *Marian Movements in the Twentieth century*, op. cit.

The moving force behind the spreading of the World Apostolate of Fatima is the urgent need for a response to this message, and for its active promotion for the sake of the salvation of souls and of peace. This point of urgency was insisted very strongly by Pope John Paul II in his homily at the Mass in the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, May 13, 1982.⁴²⁴ He said that:

*“The evangelical call to repentance and conversion contained in Our Lady of Fatima’s message remains ever relevant. It is even more relevant now than it was 65 years ago. It is now more urgent.”*⁴²⁵

Thus we can conclude that the messages of Fatima in the form of new evangelization continue to grow especially by spreading the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary throughout the world. The Message of Fatima has paved a way for a new Marian Springtime in the Church and in the world to build a better civilization of love in a world which is threatened by many modern evil forces. The World Apostolate of Fatima can be considered as a New Marian Pentecost of the Twentieth Century.

- **The Schoenstatt Movement**

Fr. Joseph Kentenich (1885-1968), the founder of the Schönstatt Apostolic Marian movement formulated a beautiful approach to Marian consecration called “The Covenant of Love.” This forms the core spirituality of the entire Schönstatt Movement in all its branches. Since I will be dealing about this Movement and its spirituality exclusively in a separate chapter, at this part of our discussion, I just want to mention here very briefly, the unique nature of Act of Consecration in the spirituality of Schönstatt, which played a big role in developing the Act of Consecration to the Blessed Mother through a mutual act of love. The novelty in the Act of Consecration in Schönstatt’s spirituality is that, Fr. Kentenich added the covenant element, which is richly present in the Bible, to the act of entrustment to Mary. The remarkable character in this act of consecration is the mutual consecration of the covenant partners. This is a new development in the practice of the act of consecration in the tradition of the Church. The act of consecration in Schönstatt is:

⁴²⁴ Cf., World Apostolate of Fatima, in:
<http://www.laici.va/content/laici/en/sezioni/associazioni/repertorio/world-apostolate-of-fatima.html>,
 18.06.13.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

“Through a solemn consecration, that is, through a perfect mutual covenant of love, we want to give ourselves to her [Mary] entirely and unreservedly for time and eternity, so that as a perfect covenant partner we may always stand in her presence and grow in holy two-in-oneness with her, and in her with the Triune God.”⁴²⁶

The covenant character in the act of consecration can be explained as follows:

*“In order to give even more weight to the **covenant** character, we intentionally speak- in the spirit of the Holy Father and the tradition of the Church, as well as in the spirit of God’s universal covenant in the history of salvation- clearly and consciously of a perfect **mutual** gift of oneself and a **mutual** absolute and total surrender of self. That means that just as we, by virtue of the covenant, surrender ourselves perfectly to Mary of our own free choice and will, she, too does the very same thing. Otherwise we could not speak of a covenant which is, by its very nature, a **totum pro toto**, an “all for all.”⁴²⁷*

“The covenant of love not only gives us the right, but even makes it our duty to make proper use of our right to make claims of love on our covenant partner, and to use the power of petition which has been given to us. In other words, just as Our Lady makes claims on and expresses wishes to us, we in turn should do the same with her.”⁴²⁸

Thus it is very evident that the mutual and perfect total surrender forms the heart piece of the Covenant of Love. The covenant spirituality is a covenant relationship, which is built on the explicit consecration of oneself to Mary. It is a consecration, which is connected with the unique mission of Mary in the history of salvation and her concrete activity as Mother and Educator in the Shrine of Schönstatt. This covenant relationship is a personal relationship, which leads into the core experience of living a mutual relationship with God through Jesus Christ and his activity in the Church today. The Covenant of Love with Mary helps to deepen the covenant relationship with God and with the entire creation.⁴²⁹ More about it we will discuss in the final part of the dissertation.

⁴²⁶ Niehaus, Jonathan (ed.), *Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality: Texts by Father Joseph Kentenich*, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1995, P. 28. (From now on this reference will be mentioned as *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*.)

⁴²⁷ Ibid., P. 31.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., P. 57.

⁴²⁹ Cf., Ibid., P. 11.

The remarkable character of the Twentieth Century was consecrating the world to the Immaculate Mary, inspired by the Messages of our Lady at Fatima, which still remain relevant for our present time. The Popes of the Twentieth Century right from Pope Pius XII to Pope John Paul II have been strongly involved in entrusting the entire world and all its nations and people to the care and protection of the Blessed Mother. This is the hallmark of the Twentieth Century. But another remarkable hallmark of the same century is the consecration of various nations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

III.5.8. The National Consecrations of Twentieth Century

There were various collective consecrations made to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which have been approved by Rome. Portugal was consecrated on May 1931; Belgium was consecrated on September 5, 1954; The Caudillo (General Franco) and all the Bishops consecrated Spain to Our Lady at the feet of the Virgin Pilar, on October 12, 1954. On September 13, 1959, anniversary of the fifth apparition at Fatima, the Italian Episcopal Conference, in Catania, at the conclusion ceremony of the National Eucharistic Conference Italy was consecrated. Pope John Paul II solemnly renewed this act at St. Peter's in Rome on the twentieth anniversary of this event, in 1979. For the twenty-fifth anniversary of the event, there was a "renewed renewal" of the consecration. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland during the post war period made his personal consecration in the year 1953 according the Grignon de Montfort in jail, because the Marxist government of Poland was at the power causing damages to the Church. Three years later, acting as the Primate of Poland, he extended this consecration to his entire people. The act of consecration, which was sent by him from jail, was read at the national sanctuary of Our Lady of Czestochowa on August 26, 1956. The liberation of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński from his confinement followed shortly after. In 1966 Cardinal Wyszyński prepared a pastoral plan for the millennium of Polish Christianity. This kind of pastoral action is, in reality, quite necessary if a votive consecration is to be really efficacious. But unfortunately this truth is too often forgotten. A concrete pastoral action in order that the consecrations made might become effective among the people is lacking even in the official consecrations of the world by the popes. Though these World and National consecrations and some pastoral actions have not been without their fruits,

the fact is that some other countries have limited themselves merely to pronouncing the formulas.⁴³⁰

III.5.9. Marian Consecration during Twenty First century

The importance and influence of the Message of Fatima could also be felt during the Twenty First century in the life of the Church.

Pope John Paul II on 8th October in the year 2000 entrusted the Third Millennium to Our Lady. The statue of Our Lady of Fatima at the Capelhina was brought to Rome for this occasion. This act of consecration was a collegial consecration as it was in the year 1984.⁴³¹ The consecration words of the Holy Father are as follows:

“Woman, behold your Son!” (Jn 19:26). As we near the end of this Jubilee Year...we hear more clearly the sweet echo of his words entrusting us to you, making you our Mother: “Woman, behold your Son!”.... Today we wish to entrust to you the future that awaits us, and we ask you to be with us on our way. We are the men and women of an extraordinary time, exhilarating yet full of contradictions. Humanity now has instruments of unprecedented power: we can turn this world into a garden, or reduce it to a pile of rubble.... Today as never before in the past, humanity stands at a crossroads. And once again, O Virgin Most Holy, salvation lies fully and uniquely in Jesus, your Son. Therefore, O Mother... here we stand before you to entrust to your maternal care ourselves, the Church, the entire world. Plead for us with your beloved Son that he may give us in abundance the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth which is the fountain of life. Receive the Spirit for us and with us, as happened in the first community gathered round you in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 1:14). May the Spirit open our hearts to justice and love, and guide people and nations to mutual understanding and a firm desire for peace. We entrust to you all people, beginning with the weakest: the babies yet unborn, and those born into poverty and suffering, the young in search of meaning, the unemployed, and those suffering hunger and disease. We entrust to you all troubled families, the elderly with no one to help them, and all who are alone and without hope. O Mother...to you, Dawn of Salvation, we commit our journey through the new Millennium, so that with you as guide all people may know Christ,

⁴³⁰ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., Pp. 74-76.

⁴³¹ Cf., Foley, Donal, *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World*, op. cit., P. 364.

the light of the world and its only Saviour, who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen."⁴³²

On May 12, 2010, **Benedict XVI** at the conclusion of the celebration of vespers with the religious, seminarians and diocesan priests prayed the Act of Entrustment and Consecration of Priests to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Fatima in the following words:

*"Immaculate Mother, in this place of grace, called together by the love of your Son Jesus the Eternal High Priest, we, sons in the Son and his priests, consecrate ourselves to your maternal Heart, in order to carry out faithfully the Father's Will.... Bride of the Holy Spirit, obtain for us the inestimable gift of transformation in Christ. Through the same power of the Spirit that overshadowed you, making you the Mother of the Saviour, help us to bring Christ your Son to birth in ourselves too. May the Church be thus renewed by priests who are holy, priests transfigured by the grace of him who makes all things new. Mother of Mercy...help us, through your powerful intercession, never to fall short of this sublime vocation, nor to give way to our selfishness, to the allurements of the world and to the wiles of the Evil One. Preserve us with your purity, guard us with your humility and enfold us with your maternal love that is reflected in so many souls consecrated to you.... Advocate and Mediatrix of grace, you who are fully immersed in the one universal mediation of Christ, invoke upon us, from God, a heart completely renewed that loves God with all its strength and serves mankind as you did. Our Mother for all time...With this act of entrustment and consecration, we wish to welcome you more deeply, more radically, forever and totally into our human and priestly lives...."*⁴³³

On 13, May 2013, at the personal request of the Holy Father **Pope Francis** Cardinal Jose Polycarp, the Patriarch of Lisbon, Portugal, consecrated the pontificate of Pope Francis to Our Lady of Fatima on the 96th anniversary of the apparition of Mary to three children. Cardinal Jose Polycarp recited the prayer of entrustment, which he wrote himself, at the end of a Mass concluding a major international pilgrimage to Fatima. He prayed:

"Give him the gift of discernment to know how to identify the ways of renewal of the church; give him the courage not to hesitate to

⁴³² John Paul II, *Act of Entrustment to Mary*, Sunday 8 October 2000, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20001008_act-entrustment-mary_en.html, 18.06.13.

⁴³³ Benedict XVI, *Act of Entrustment and Consecration of Priests to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, Wednesday, 12 May 2010, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/prayers/documents/hf_ben-xvi_20100512_affidamento-fatima_en.html, 18.06.13.

*follow the ways suggested by the Holy Spirit; support him in the hard hours of suffering to overcome with the charity the trials that the renewal of the church will bring. **We consecrate to you, Our Lady, mother of the church, the ministry of the new pope.** Fill his heart with the tenderness of God that you experienced so that he can embrace all the men and women of our age with the love of your son Jesus Christ.*"⁴³⁴

During the Mass on May 12, 2013 at the Fatima shrine, **Archbishop Orani Joao Tempesta** of Rio de Janeiro entrusted to Mary all the young people who are preparing to attend World Youth Day in Rio in July.⁴³⁵

On June 8, 2013, Philippines was consecrated to the Immaculate heart of Mary. This is the first national Consecration of this century. **Luis Antonio G. Cardinal Tagle**, the Archbishop of Manila in his circular on May 10, 2013 addressed to all parish priests, rectors, chaplains, spiritual directors of parishes, shrines, chaplaincies and communities, religious and lay faithful, wrote the following information:

*"The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines declared in its 106th Plenary Assembly on January 28, 2013, "the holding of a simultaneous National Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on June 8, 2013, feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at 10 in the morning in all cathedrals, parish churches, shrines and chapels in all the archdioceses, dioceses, prelatures and apostolic vicariates of the country. This solemn act entrustment and consecration is part of our Year of Faith observance and also part of the nine-year preparation for the 2021 celebration of the arrival of the Christian faith in the Philippines. This act of renewal, accompanies necessarily by our renewal of consecration to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, relies on the immense grace from God that passes through the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary for us, her children whom she loves. "Pueblo Amante de Maria": Isang Bayang Sumisinta kay Maria. The national consecration desires that under the banner of Mary all Filipinos will be one and in peace in faith and love. Let June 8, 2013 be our very special day with our Blessed Mother, our very own Mother's day, when we all come together under her mantle of care and protection, of comfort and consolation, of love and peace, and be renewed in faith in Jesus Christ, sent to us by the father through the Holy Spirit. We will do this confident that we are **Pueblo Amante de Maria, Isang Bayang Sumisinta kay Maria.** I ask all to gather in your parishes, shrines, and chaplaincies and really pour our heart and soul in this*

⁴³⁴ Francis' pontificate consecrated to Our Lady of Fatima, in: <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2013/05/francis-pontificate-consecrated-to-our.html>, 18.06.13.

⁴³⁵ Cf., Ibid.

*act of consecration, to reinvigorate the world in the love of God.”*⁴³⁶

During his visit to Brazil to take part in the events of the World Youth Day, which were scheduled to be held from 23 July to 28 July 2013, Pope Francis made a visit to the Marian Shrine of Aparecida, which lies two hundred kilometers from Rio de Janeiro. His pontificate Pope Francis entrusted his ministry as Successor of Peter to Our Lady making a surprise visit to Rome’s Basilica of Saint Mary Major on the day after his election. On 24th July in Brazil Pope Francis chose to repeat this gesture of entrustment with an act of consecration to Our Lady of Aparecida, which took place at the end of the Holy Mass celebrated in Portuguese with the local Bishops.⁴³⁷ The following is the prayer of consecration, which was prayed by him before the image of our Lady:

*“Mother Aparecida,
today I feel like you once did
before your God and mine,
who proposes for our lives a mission
whose contours and limits we ignore,
whose demands we only glimpse.
Yet in your faith that “nothing is impossible with God,”
O Mother,
you did not hesitate,
and so I cannot hesitate.*

*“Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be done unto me
according to your word!”*

*In this way, O Mother, like you,
I embrace my mission.
Into your hands I put my life
and we will
– you-mother and me-son –
we will walk together,
believe together,
fight together,
win together as your Son and you always walked together.*

“Woman, behold your son! Son, behold your mother!”

⁴³⁶ *National Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on June 8, 2013*, in: <http://rcam.org/news/1012-national-consecration-to-the-immaculate-heart-of-mary-on-june-8-2013>, 21.06.13.

⁴³⁷ Cf., Scarisbrick, Veronica, “Aparecida: knocking at Mary’s door...”, in: <http://www.news.va/en/news/aparecida-knocking-at-marys-door>, 14.10.13.

*Mother Aparecida,
 You once took your Son to the Temple
 to consecrate him to the Father,
 that he might be fully available for the mission which awaited him.
 Lift me up today to the same Father,
consecrate me to him,
all that I am and all that I have.*

“Here I am! Send me!”

*Mother Aparecida,
 I put in your hands,
 and so take to the Father, our and your youth, and World Youth
 Day:
 so much strength, so much life,
 so much dynamism sprouting and bursting,
 which can be at service of life, of mankind.*

“Father, welcome and sanctify your youth!”

*Finally, O Mother, we ask you:
 stay here,
 always welcoming your son and daughter pilgrims,
 but also come with us, be always by our side
 and go along with us,
 the great family of your devotees, in our own missions:
 especially when the cross weighs heavy,
 sustain our hope and our faith.*

“Keep faithful, and I will give you the crown of life. Amen!”⁴³⁸

One of the important highlights of the Year of Faith was the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Pope Francis in Rome. On the Marian Day, Sunday the 13th May 2013, the 96th anniversary of the final apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima in 1917, Pope Francis celebrated the Holy Mass in Saint Peter’s Square and then consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as part of the Marian Day celebration with the iconic statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima.⁴³⁹ The Pope consecrated the world by reciting the following prayer:

⁴³⁸ *Mother, Together We Will Fight... Together We Will Win - At the Vatican, The Pope’s Marian Days*, in: <http://whispersintheloggia.blogspot.de/2013/10/mother-we-will-fight-together-we-will.html>, 14.10.13.

⁴³⁹ Cf., Sergio Mora, H., “*Pope To Consecrate World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on Sunday*”, in: <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-to-consecrate-world-to-the-immaculate-heart-of-mary-on-sunday>, 14.10.13. ; The statue Our Lady of Fatima which is venerated in the Chapel of the Apparitions, was brought to Rome for the Marian Day organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization and it remained in Rome on October 12 and 13.

*“Holy Mary Virgin of Fatima,
 with renewed gratitude for your maternal presence
 we join our voice to that of all the generations
 who call you blessed.
 We celebrate in you the works of God,
 who never tires of looking down with mercy
 upon humanity, afflicted with the wound of sin,
 to heal it and save it.
 Accept with the benevolence of a Mother
 the act of consecration that we perform today with confidence,
 before this image of you that is so dear to us.
 We are certain that each of us is precious in your eyes
 and that nothing of all that lives in our hearts is unknown to you.
 We let ourselves be touched by your most sweet regard
 and we welcome the consoling caress of your smile.
 Hold our life in your arms:
 bless and strengthen every desire for good;
 revive and nourish faith;
 sustain and enlighten hope;
 awaken and animate charity;
 guide all of us along the path of holiness.
 Teach us your own preferential love
 for the little and the poor,
 for the excluded and the suffering,
 for sinners and the downhearted:
 bring everyone under your protection
 and entrust everyone to your beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus.
 Amen.”⁴⁴⁰*

All these facts tell us that the devotion of consecration to Mary continues even into the 21st Century and it still continues to have a great impact on the life of the faithful.

III.6. Conclusion

The detailed survey of the history of the devotion of Consecration to Mary in the setting of the history of the Marian devotion in the life of the Church clearly tells us that in Christianity there is a search for the holiness and an ardent quest to belong to the eternal God by means of consecration to Mary. It is indeed very amazing to know how much attention has been given to Mary in the religious practices of

⁴⁴⁰ *Prayer of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, (translated by: Joseph Trabbic), in: http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/prayer-of-consecration-to-the-blessed-virgin-mary?utm_campaign=dailyhtml&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dispatch, 14.10.13.

Christianity. The first Christians honoured her in the darkness of the catacombs; the Fathers, Doctors and the Popes of the Church honoured her in their immortal writings; the Founders of various religious congregations honoured her through their Marian spirituality; the simple faithful honoured her by trying to give her an all-pervading place in their lives, all through the centuries. Right from the birth of the Church, always and in all ways, all generations honoured and praised Mary and they have manifested their love for Mary. But the supreme act of love, which the Church has shown to the Mother of God, is through Marian Consecration. The devotion of consecration to Mary manifests the firm belief of the Church that by entrusting oneself to Mary through an Act of Consecration, Mary would lead us more deeply into a loving relationship with her Son.⁴⁴¹

At the same time one cannot overlook the fact that the zeal and emphasis of Marian Consecration in the life of the Church have known great changes. On one side the increased desacralization of the modern world of the past, since the Sixteenth Century served as an inspiration for the birth of religious movements in order to realize authentic consecrations to the divine love through Mary. But on the other side there were also very stormy times due to the weakness and due to some exaggerations of the human beings, which ultimately lead to the excesses and to the wrong emphasis of piety towards her. But nothing could shake the deep roots of devotion towards Mary, which is seated deeply in the Christian faith. Time and again efforts were made through number of writings to remove all these false exaggerations and the narrow mindedness by creating a new understanding of the devotion towards her. But it is very unfortunate to know that in our present world due to the rapid growth of materialism the generous movements of consecrations are discredited and paralyzed.⁴⁴²

The urgent need of today's Church is the emergence of a great personality like Pope John Paul II to bring forth the new streams of Marian Consecration into the life and spirituality of the Church and to awaken the paralyzed movements of consecration back to life. Having journeyed through the history of the Marian Consecration, let us now proceed to examine the significance and foundations of Marian consecration, along with its objections and problems involved in it.

⁴⁴¹ Cf., Roschini, Gabriel, M., *The Divine Masterpiece*, translated and adapted from the Italian by Peter J. R. Dempsey, The Mercier Press, Ltd., 1954, P. 120.

⁴⁴² Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 90.

IV. Marian Consecration and its Significance

IV.1. Introduction

The tradition of the Church gives witness to the fact that the Marian Consecration has been seen as an efficient way by the faithful to live a sort of consecrated life in the midst of the world. Many religious congregations have promoted the Marian Consecration through their religious consecrations.⁴⁴³ Down through the centuries the faithful have aspired to get special graces and benefits through the practice of Marian Consecration. They have obliged themselves to devotional acts of entrustments or dedication in order to get the special protection and intercession of Mary. Her role in such acts of entrustments and dedications became very essential in the course of history and it has been recognized and emphasized. Laurentin says that both in the historical and in the ontological order, her role is essential to consecration. It is because Mary is the most consecrated person in the entire human race. She was the one who gave humanity to the Son of God, who in turn consecrated both himself and us in that humanity.⁴⁴⁴

Marian Consecration gained momentum in the history of the Church only after the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pope Leo XIII on consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus says:

*“For by consecrating ourselves to Him we not only declare our open and free acknowledgment and acceptance of His authority over us, but we also testify that if what we offer as a gift were really our own, we would still offer it with our whole heart. We also beg of Him that He would vouchsafe to receive it from us, though clearly His own.”*⁴⁴⁵

Through this statement, Pope Leo XIII conveys to the faithful the conviction that our consecration to Christ involves the acceptance of the dominion of Christ to such an extent that we acknowledge that anything we could give Him belongs already to Him. Christ as the King of the Universe has got the most absolute rights to our service. He in His generosity wants us to present to Him our service as if we did

⁴⁴³ Cf., Stöckl, Fidelis, *Mary, Model and Mother of Consecrated Life: A Marian Synthesis of Theology of Consecrated Life based on the Teachings of John Paul II*, ICLA Publications, 2003², P. 228.

⁴⁴⁴ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 143.

⁴⁴⁵ Leo XIII, *Annum Sacrum*, No. 7, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_25051899_annum-sacrum_en.html, 25.06.13.

not already owe it to Him.⁴⁴⁶ If Christ is seen as the King of the Universe, the Church sees Mary as the Queen of the Universe. This was clearly expressed by the Vatican II, in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. It states:

*“Finally, the Immaculate Virgin... on the completion of her earthly sojourn, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the universe, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and the conqueror of sin and death.”*⁴⁴⁷

Thus acknowledging Mary as the Queen of the universe indicates that she too has got her domain, which is as vast as that of her Son and God. This was already expressed by Pope Pius XII who said: *“And her domain is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion.”*⁴⁴⁸ This statement points out to the reality that Mary forms a unitary principle with her Son and with God. Her Queenship and Her Son’s Kingship are inseparable. If it is so then one can apply the very same words of Pope Leo XIII about the consecration to Christ the King to the Act of Consecration to Mary. This would mean that in our Marian Consecration we accept her as the Queen of the Universe along with her Son and ask her to accept our offerings graciously to which she already has a right. By acknowledging her Queenly dominion, we give her our final say. This understanding about the merits and privileges of Mary led to the rapid growth of consecrations, which were addressed exclusively to Mary in various forms.⁴⁴⁹ But one should not forget the underlying fact that the consecration to Mary will always remain subordinate and dependent on the consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, her Son.

In order to have a clear understanding about the Marian Consecration, we need to examine and explore the fundamental concepts and their significance behind the devotion of consecration to Mary. Let us first consider what it means to consecrate oneself to Mary.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf., Most, William, G., op. cit., P. 135.

⁴⁴⁷ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 59, in:
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 25.06.13.

⁴⁴⁸ Pius XII, *Benedictio Seia*, May 13, 1946: AAS 38, 266, as cited in: Most, William, G., op. cit., P. 136.

⁴⁴⁹ Cf., Most, William, G., Loc. cit.

IV.2. The Fundamental Concepts of Marian Consecration

The concept of Marian Consecration is not always easy to understand. It is on one side very mysterious and on the other side it is very complex in its nature. To proceed further to have a clear understanding of consecration to Mary, it is necessary to clarify certain basic principles concerning consecration before we plunge into our discussion.

Every consecration is a sacred separation, which takes place either through divine initiative or through a blessing rite. Dedication of any person, place or thing to the divine can be termed as consecration. It includes both the divine initiative as well as the response of human beings to God's call. Strictly speaking there can be only one type of consecration, namely the consecration to God, because He alone has the power to make something or some person holy and sacred. According to the underlying concept of sacredness we can distinguish various forms of consecration.

IV.2.1. Cultic Consecration in the strict sense

Engelbert Zeitler explains this Cultic consecration as follows:

*"They presuppose the faith in a relationship of dependence to a higher being that cannot be changed, but acknowledged symbolically in cultic forms. The most eminent expression of the cultic form is the cultic reservation, by which persons or things are withdrawn from the profane use and are destined or "consecrated" for the service of the sacred. Magical consecrations can be considered as a special form of cultic consecration. They also presuppose the faith in higher beings, but by certain practices of consecration it might be possible to acquire possession over them. This is performed in order to either safeguard oneself against their threatening claims or in order to partake in their divine powers or, in an extreme case even to identify themselves with the deity by certain mysterious consecrations."*⁴⁵⁰

IV.2.2. Consecration in attenuated sense

It refers to:

"A multitude of mixed forms to place something in relationship with the deity. This is done in order to either acknowledge symbolically the sovereignty of the deity or to obtain an increase of one's own powers and so to be able to cope with the higher

⁴⁵⁰ Zeitler, Engelbert, P., op. cit., P. 14, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

*demands without withdrawing the “consecrated” from the profane.”*⁴⁵¹

IV.2.3. Consecration in the figurative sense

Consecration in the figurative sense would mean to transfer the effects of the consecration to something else.

*“Such effects could be for instance: to withdraw something from human arbitrariness and to assign it to the realm of divine right. In this case it means that by consecration, something is to be made sacrosanct or to give something a share in God’s immortality. In this sense consecration would mean to immortalize, to eternalize. It could also mean to sacrifice something to evil forces in order to spell its doom. Finally, to consecrate oneself according to the psychological impact of consecration in a person refers to an attitude of surrendering oneself to a person and lastly to something of value. This shows that the concept of consecration changes according to the underlying concept of “sacrum”, and finally to the concept of God.”*⁴⁵²

IV.2.4. Consecration in an analogue sense

In the course of the history of the Church many devotional practices led to the practice of devotion or consecrations, which were not addressed to the transcendent God alone but which were addressed to the creatures.

*“The transcendence of God, which in the last analysis is the reason for a consecration, can be transferred in an analogue meaning also to his creatures. Consecrations can be found at all times by persons of an inferior status to super ordinate persons, this is to say, consecrations to creatures, and this is found both in the religious as well as in the civil sphere. One may think for instance of the consecrations to St. Michael, which were popular in the Middle Ages, or of the consecrations of the feudal order of society, which through their religious accompanying ceremonies point out to God as their ultimate goal. Such consecrations – according to the foundations on which they are based – establish either a purely private relationship (the person, to whom the consecration is directed, is object of imitation and of special love etc.), or a publicly legal relationship in the sense of patronage, which brings about rights and duties.”*⁴⁵³

Marian Consecration can be understood only in the light of this analogue sense. A detailed discussion on the application of the principle of analogy in Marian Consecration will follow in the later part of this chapter.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁴⁵² Ibid., (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁴⁵³ Ibid. P. 15, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

IV.2.5. The Meaning of Marian Consecration

Generally speaking we can say that consecration to Mary is nothing but taking recourse to Mary and entrusting oneself totally to her motherly care and love through a prayer. The prayer could be a prayer of petition and entrustment where one invokes her powerful intercession to win for us various graces, protection and help. But the main aim of Marian consecration is to belong to Jesus in a more perfect manner. In this sense we can say that consecration to Mary is basically a consecration to Jesus through Mary. Mark Miravalle says:

*“Marian Consecration is fundamentally a promise of love and a gift of self that gives all that the Christian is and does completely and directly to the Mother of the Lord, which thereby allows her to unite us to her Divine Son in ways simply not possible without her powerful maternal intercession. Consecration to Jesus through Mary is to give oneself entirely to Mary in a self-donation of love that enables the Mediatrix of all graces to use her full intercessory power to keep a person faithful to his or her baptismal promises to Jesus Christ.”*⁴⁵⁴

Thus we can say that the consecration of oneself to Jesus through Mary requires the giving of oneself totally to Jesus through her. And hence we can sum it up in the following words:

*“Consecration to Mary is consecration to the “perfect means” (Montfort), which Jesus chose to unite himself with us and vice versa. Consecration to Mary heightens the depth and truth of our commitment to Christ. Consecration to Mary must explicitly state that our ultimate goal and end is God (Holy Spirit; Christ our Lord). Consecrations to Mary where one pledges to perform all actions “through Mary, in Mary, and for Mary” are in fact a pledge to perform them more perfectly through Jesus Christ, with him, in, and for him. Dedication to the Heart of Mary must therefore maintain the vital unity between the Heart of Mary and the Heart of Jesus. We must confide ourselves to the Heart of Mary in view of our consecration to God.”*⁴⁵⁵

IV.2.6. Consecration to Mary is a Consecration to Christ

A human person may consecrate to nobody except to God alone. If consecration belongs to God alone, how can one understand the concept of consecration to Mary? Leo Scheffczyk says that consecration to Mary can be

⁴⁵⁴ Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 153-154.

⁴⁵⁵ *What is the meaning of Consecration? - Consecration to Mary*, in: <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/questions/faq/faq23.html>, 25.06.13.

understood only in the light of consecration to Christ. He explains it in the following manner:

“Consecration to Mary belongs to the sphere of worship of God and of Jesus Christ. This is similar to the principle that is valid for the veneration of saints: veneration of saints is finally a worship of God. Although it makes good sense to say: consecration to Mary is consecration to Christ, this statement however should not be understood as a perfect equation of these two “objects”. It only wants to say that Mary is not the recipient of human devotion and is not addressed for her own sake, but only as the bearer of Christ and mediator of Christ. Mary should not be always regarded merely as an intermediary point of surrender, which would devalue our personal relationship with her. The consecration is directed to Mary as a person whose essential character is her union with Christ. (...) This shows that such an act of devotion that is founded on the conscious recognition of the order of salvation with its emphasis on the unique bond - Christ and Mary - as ordained by God, can deepen and strengthen the union with Christ.”⁴⁵⁶

Leo Scheffczyk affirms that the meaning of this consecration to Mary is ultimately based on the principle: *through Mary to Christ*.⁴⁵⁷ He says:

“Whoever surrenders himself/herself to Christ in the clear awareness of Christ’s relationship to Mary, his/her union with Christ will become deeper, wider and richer. It is extended and enriched by those particular elements, which are constituted by the unique bond of Christ to Mary and by Mary’s unique openness for redemption. In so far as the consecration to Mary is an explicit, vital and missionary profession to God’s order of salvation, it will unleash special powers and the Church cannot do without them.”⁴⁵⁸

Thus we understand that one can be consecrated only to God alone and all consecrations which are addressed to Mary are automatically transferred to God because of her total union with God and because she shares everything with her Son. Due to this fundamental fact we can say that the consecration to Mary is a consecration to Christ.

IV.2.7. Consecration to Mary deepens one’s Baptismal Consecration

The baptismal vows call us to renounce sin and to strive to be completely separated from all that is evil and to be totally united to God in Jesus. Undeniably the

⁴⁵⁶ Scheffczyk, Leo, op. cit., P. 259, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁴⁵⁷ Cf., Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., Pp. 259-260.

effects of the baptismal consecration, namely, the complete separation from sin and total union with God are not completely realized, because the inclination to commit sin continues to exist in human beings. Because of this inclination one is easily tempted and one is easily drawn away from God back into the influence of evil. One finds himself/herself not perfectly united to God and at the same time also strongly linked to sin.⁴⁵⁹ The vows of baptism are the greatest and the most indispensable of all vows for St. Augustine. The Councils of the Church have said that the disorders in the life of Christians, the sins and the vices to which they gave themselves were due to the fact the Christians forgot their solemn promises of baptism. Hence renewal of baptismal vows was recommended by the Church Councils.⁴⁶⁰

The consecration of a person to Jesus through Mary is defined by Montfort as the perfect renewal of baptismal vows. Montfort equates consecration to Mary with the renewal of baptism, because according to him it is impossible to reject the consecration without overturning Christianity itself.⁴⁶¹ He states this in the following words:

*“No one can object that this devotion is novel or of no value. It is not new, since the Councils, the Fathers of the Church, and many authors both past and present, speaks of consecration to our Lord or renewal of baptismal vows as something going back to ancient times and recommended to all the faithful. Nor is it valueless, since the chief source of moral disorders and the consequent eternal loss of Christians spring from the forgetfulness of this practice and indifference to it.”*⁴⁶²

Montfort calls for a formal, loving practical recognition of the reality of salvation history, namely, we have been made one with the Father through Christ, who is the Mediator of our Redemption and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through baptism we have been inserted into the saving life of Christ our Redeemer. According to Montfort the act of consecration to Mary is nothing less than the renewal of our baptism.⁴⁶³ In his treatise on *Love for Eternal Wisdom* Montfort says:

⁴⁵⁹ Cf., Stöckl, Fidelis, op. cit., P. 238.

⁴⁶⁰ Cf., Amatora, Sister Mary, *The Queen's Way: Or, To Jesus Through Mary: A simplified edition of St. Louis De Montfort's classic work, "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin"*, Montfort Publications, 1954, P. 90.

⁴⁶¹ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignion De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., P. 147.

⁴⁶² *True Devotion to Mary*, 131, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 330.

⁴⁶³ Cf., Id.

*“I, an unfaithful sinner, renew and ratify today through you my baptismal promises. I renounce forever satan, his empty promises, and his evil designs, and I give myself completely to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after him for the rest of my life, and to be more faithful to him than I have been till now. This day, with the whole court of heaven as witness, I choose you, Mary, as my Mother and Queen. I surrender and consecrate myself to you, body and soul, with all that I possess, both spiritual and material, even including the spiritual value of all my actions, past, present, and to come. I give you the full right to dispose of me and all that belongs to me, without any reservations, in whatever way you please, for the greater glory of God in time and throughout eternity.”*⁴⁶⁴

He further says that *“this devotion could rightly be called a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy baptism.”*⁴⁶⁵

The Marian Saint Montfort in his *True Devotion* recommends that the only perfect way to live our baptismal consecration consists in giving oneself totally to Mary in order to belong to her. He says this in the following way:

*“As all perfection consists in our being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus it naturally follows that the most perfect of all devotions is that which conforms, unites, and consecrates us most completely to Jesus. Now of all God’s creatures Mary is the most conformed to Jesus. It therefore follows that, of all devotions, devotion to her makes for the most effective consecration and conformity to him. The more one is consecrated to Mary, the more one is consecrated to Jesus. That is why perfect consecration to Jesus is but a perfect and complete consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin, which is the devotion I teach; or in other words, it is the perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy baptism.”*⁴⁶⁶

Thus from the teachings of Montfort it is very clear to understand that consecration to Mary is the best way to renew the living promises made in baptism in order to live the Christian life and to avoid the slavery of the devil by sin.

⁴⁶⁴ *Love of Eternal Wisdom*, 225, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 113.

⁴⁶⁵ *True Devotion to Mary*, 126, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 328.

⁴⁶⁶ *True Devotion to Mary*, 120, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 327.

IV.2.8. Consecration to Mary is a Perfect Consecration

Consecration to Mary is perfect because it is a perfect consecration to Jesus Christ. Mary is the most perfect creature on this earth among all the other creatures, because she is united in a most intimate and perfect way with Jesus. Thus, when a person consecrates himself/herself to Mary, the person is totally consecrated and united with Jesus in a perfect manner.⁴⁶⁷ Grignion de Montfort says that the perfect and true devotion to Mary consists in entrusting one's self entirely to Jesus through her and he suggests that one should entrust to her the following items:⁴⁶⁸

- “1 Our body with its senses and members;*
- 2 Our soul with its faculties;*
- 3 Our present material possessions and all we shall acquire in the future;*
- 4 Our interior and spiritual possessions, that is, our merits, virtues and good actions of the past, the present and the future.”*⁴⁶⁹

This indicates that in consecration to Mary one is invited to empty oneself in every way in order to give all to Mary once for all so that she could do with them what she feels as best. This act of entrustment is done without any expectation except the joy of belonging to Jesus in a perfect manner through and in Mary. All our good works help us to atone for our sin and they gain for us merit for heaven. The person who has made this consecration has no right to dispose any of the good works or actions by himself because he has now given everything to Mary. Since Mary knows God's will most perfectly she will use it wherever she wants for the greatest glory of God. All our merits, graces and virtues will be safe in Mary and she will enrich and enlarge them and save them for our eternity.⁴⁷⁰

The consecration to Mary is a complete giving of one's self than anything in this world and it goes much beyond the consecrations in any religious orders. In religious orders the worldly goods are sacrificed by the vow of poverty, the body is given in the vow of chastity and the self-will is renounced in the vow of obedience. But the religious is not expected to renounce completely all his/her merits and satisfactions for sin. This is where the consecration to Mary goes beyond it. All our prayers, all our sufferings, all our penances and all one does and one says belong to

⁴⁶⁷ Cf., Amatora, Sister Mary, *The Queen's Way: Or, To Jesus Through Mary*, op. cit., P. 85.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf., *True Devotion to Mary*, 121, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 327.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Cf., Amatora, Sister Mary, *The Queen's Way: Or, To Jesus Through Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 86-87.

Mary through the consecration. She has the sole right to dispose of them according to the will of her Son. This dependence upon Mary does not interfere in any way with the duties and obligations of a person's state of life. It neither interferes in one's present state of life nor in any future state of life, which he embraces. No matter whether a person is a member of a religious order, whether a person is married or in the single state in this world, one can still practice and live this total and complete consecration to Mary, without any fear of interference with the duties and obligations of the state of life in which one finds himself/herself. For example the consecration to Mary does not interfere with the duty and obligation of a priest to offer the Holy Mass for a particular person or intention. Thus we can say that the consecration to Mary edifies the life of a person and helps one to live his/her state of life in a better manner and so to lead a true Christian life. This consecration can be considered as a consecration both to Jesus and to Mary at the same time. Consecrating ourselves to Mary is the most perfect and the best means, which Jesus has given to us so that we might be completely united to Him. Everything belongs to our Redeemer, to our Lord and God but we give it all back to Him again by the hands of His Holy Mother. Thus it is a perfect consecration in every respect.⁴⁷¹

IV.2.9. Chief Features in living out our Consecration to Mary

William G. Most says that there are two phases in order to complete a consecration. The First Phase is making the consecration to Mary and the Second Phase is living out the consecration, which has been made. He brings out the following three striking features in living out our consecration to Mary. He says:

"First, we live in the consciousness of our dependence on her. She is our Queen, our spiritual Mother, the one on whom, next to her Son, we depend for everything. All grace comes to us through her hands. She has the right, for we have given it to her, to dispose of all our spiritual goods insofar as they are disposable. She has even the right, as our "Attorney" to make offers in our name to the Father. In a sense, we pray only through her. This does not mean that we never address our prayers to the Father, to her Son, or to other Saints.... But even when we speak directly to the Father or to the Son, or to the Divine Spirit, we try to be aware at least in a general way that we depend on her merits and intercession for everything. For, she shared with her Son in earning all graces. As a result, whatever is given us, is given through the merits and

⁴⁷¹ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 87-89.

satisfactions of Jesus and Mary, operating, as we said, as a unit, as one."⁴⁷²

Secondly, a soul, which is dedicated to Mary in a special way, realizing her close union with the Divinity, rightly tries to cultivate the awareness of Mary along with the awareness of God in order to live in her presence. The means of cultivating this awareness by different souls are not the same. The different means of cultivating the awareness are:⁴⁷³

"Some employ conditioned reflexes, e.g., they form the habit of saying some ejaculation or other brief prayer every time they enter their room, or go up or down steps, or do some other familiar thing. At first, a special effort is needed; in time, one almost automatically begins to say such a prayer in such circumstances. The prayer is valuable both in itself, and as a means of recalling her presence. Others like the method of "small talk". That is, as they go about their regular occupations, they often speak informally to Mary, merely telling her what they are doing, how it is going, asking for light, for help. This is not the most exalted prayer, but it is a good prayer, a helpful means of contact. This awareness of her presence of course cannot be constant."⁴⁷⁴

Thirdly the soul tries to cultivate the attitude of obedience to Mary. This is because the soul, which has dedicated itself to Mary, realizes the fact that she has got a share in the royal dominion of her Son, who is Christ the King. Therefore obedience to Him is at the same time obedience to her. The soul gladly accepts this fact and at the same time tries to understand her expectations.⁴⁷⁵ It understands that:

"She wants us to obey all legitimate commands of all lawful authorities; she wants us to make the best use of providentially sent mortifications, so that we not only do not complain, but actually welcome them with joy."⁴⁷⁶

But in the practical management of our daily lives, there are no certain and easy ways to determine her will in the matters of many other decisions in our life. The soul, dedicated to her, asks her at times to obtain light in order to understand the divine inspirations. Thus the souls dedicated to Mary try through the above

⁴⁷² Most, William, G., op. cit., Pp. 137-138.

⁴⁷³ Cf., Ibid., P. 138.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., P. 139.

⁴⁷⁵ Cf., Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

mentioned means to bring her into every facet of their spiritual life and continue to live in her presence.⁴⁷⁷

IV.2.10. Consecration to Mary is not just a Prayer of Petition

Leo Scheffczyk is of the opinion that one cannot equate a consecration to Mary with a prayer of petition. According to him a petition is not the same as a “consecration”.⁴⁷⁸ He explains this concept in the following manner:

*“It is however true that in the act of consecration and in a prayer of consecration there is always an important element called “request”. But this is not the exclusive and determining part. There are other elements in the act of consecration that are important and determining, like praise, obligation, surrender, and combined with this a certain “selection” for God: all these are connected with a certain objective effect on the “consecrated”. This does not happen in a prayer of petition in the same way. However all these elements also differ in the various forms and types of consecrations. They appear in different combinations, in a different emphasis and graduation. One might therefore say that in the various forms of consecration something different also occurs. A consecration of a certain country to Mary is made for a specific purpose and effect, which is something different when compared to a consecration of oneself. Our theological thinking needs to be aware of those distinctions, which is not always easy.”*⁴⁷⁹

Leo Scheffczyk explains further this concept in a deeper manner, by using the examples from the history of Marian devotion. He explains it as follows:

“Already very early in the life of the Church (in relation with the Council of Ephesus 431), there emerged the custom of consecrating churches and sanctuaries to Mary, corresponding to a similar custom in relation to saints. In such a consecration we can find that there is in the first instance an expression of appreciation, of veneration and of homage to Mary. However, this is not the decisive element because there is an intention connected together with the homage that the specific sanctuary or the place should be specially selected or set apart for Mary and it should be given over to her. In every ecclesiastical benediction there is a firm conviction that God can select certain created things (in this case through the mediation of the saints) to be withdrawn from worldly use in order to gain a kind of “sacredness”. This sacredness does not consist in the sanctifying grace, but in the special, blessing-filled favour of God towards the created thing. Its pious use by the human beings may bring them blessings and spiritual gifts. It is obvious that even this form of a Marian Consecration cannot be understood and

⁴⁷⁷ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 139-140.

⁴⁷⁸ Cf., Scheffczyk, Leo, op. cit., P. 254, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

*classified merely as a prayer of petition, because there is an objective and a lasting effect on the “consecrated” thing. It constitutes a lasting relationship of the consecrated thing to Mary. This has to be understood in analogy to a protective relationship.”*⁴⁸⁰

According to Leo Scheffczyk this protective relationship will be deepened in the case of a consecration of an individual or a group of persons or countries. One has to distinguish here whether the individual or a group of persons entrusts oneself directly to Our Lady or whether they are entrusted by ‘others’ to Our Lady. He is of the opinion that the practice of entrusting the individual or a group of persons by ‘others’ is a very rare phenomenon in the history of Marian devotion. The prayer from an old ritual used in Cambrai during 1600 serves as a good example for the practice of entrusting the individual to Our Lady by someone else. The following was the text of the prayer, which was addressed to Christ:⁴⁸¹

*“O Lady, you who listened to your dying Son on Calvary confide you to the Apostle John, and who, in that very same hour, became Our Mother as well, deign to accept as your child, this child of God, _____, who has just been sanctified by the waters of baptism in the blood of your Son Jesus. Deign to count him henceforth among your own children and watch over him with the love of a mother. Watch over his body and give him good health; watch over his soul and keep him from sin. Keep him faithful to your Son. If he should ever go astray, follow after him with your love so that he will obtain pardon and return to the Faith and the Christian life in order that in heaven he will share eternal life with all of us in the house of the Father, in the intimacy of the Son, and in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen!”*⁴⁸²

Based on the text of this prayer, Leo Scheffczyk distinguishes the aspect of petition and consecration as follows:

“Here the consecration has adopted the character of a prayer to Mary, asking for blessing and protection. She should bestow upon this child her continued assistance. This, of course, is combined with a particular commitment of the petitioner. It should not be doubted that such a placing of a person under the blessing and protection of Mary is objectively effective, especially if it is done according to an ecclesiastical rite. This belief is rooted in the truth of the spiritual motherhood of Mary with regard to people, in her mediation and in the universal power of intercession with her Son. Such an objective consecration or recommendation of an

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., Pp. 254-255, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁴⁸¹ Cf., Ibid., P. 255.

⁴⁸² Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, op. cit., P. 101.

individual to Mary by someone else is of course religiously and existentially not of the same value when compared with the consecration to Mary of a community or of an individual, done by himself/herself. It is because, in this, a mutual personal relationship is established, a kind of a covenant has been entered, which is only possible by a personal decision and it corresponds to a permanent commitment on the part of the persons concerned."⁴⁸³

Thus we can conclude that consecration to Mary is not just a prayer of petition but it is a mutual personal relationship between Mary and the individual.

IV.2.11. The Objectives of Consecration to Mary

Marian consecrations were practiced and encouraged especially by the Marian Congregations since the 17th century. In these congregations Marian consecration was usually performed by the individual members at the time of admission to the Congregation. This consecration of an individual by himself/herself points out to the fact that it is the highest form of Marian consecration. Pope Pius XII explained the meaning of these consecrations practiced among the sodalists with the following words:⁴⁸⁴

*"The sodalists show a special veneration to Our Lady and surrender themselves to her in a consecration; in this they take upon themselves the duty – however not under sin – under the banner of Mary to do everything for their own and their neighbours' sanctification and eternal salvation of all."*⁴⁸⁵

The practice of the sodalists highlights clearly the objectives of consecration to Mary. Leo Scheffczyk clearly points them out as follows:

"It does not consist in the gaining of certain spiritual gifts or favours. It consists in the intention to sanctify one's life, which, as grace can, of course, not be caused by Mary but can be given alone by God. The bond that has been established with Mary, which of course, does not have the character of a vow, is not terminated in Mary, but with her participation is directed further towards the God of grace. But it also should be seen that according to this declaration the bond with Mary is not just merely to pursue a private goal, but that its character, in accordance with the mission

⁴⁸³ Id., Pp. 255-256, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁴⁸⁴ Cf., Ibid., P. 256.

⁴⁸⁵ AAS 40 {1948} 401, in: Ibid, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider). The original text is: „Die Soldaten bekunden für die Mutter Gottes eine besondere Verehrung und geben sich ihr in einer Weihe ganz zu eigen; sie verpflichten sich damit – wenn auch nicht unter Sünde – unter der Fahne Mariens für die eigene und des Nächsten Heiligung und ewige Seligkeit alles einzusetzen.“

*of Mary, is of an apostolic nature and that it is directed towards the salvation of all.*⁴⁸⁶

IV.2.12. The Effects of the Marian Consecration

Montfort in his treatise on “*The Secret of Mary*” clearly lists out the effects of the devotion of the consecration to Mary. He says:

“This devotion faithfully practiced produces countless happy effects in the soul. The most important of them is that it establishes, even here on earth, Mary’s life in the soul, so that it is no longer the soul that lives, but Mary who lives in it. In a manner of speaking, Mary’s soul becomes identified with the soul of her servant. Indeed when by an unspeakable but real grace Mary most holy becomes Queen of a soul, she works untold wonders in it.

As Mary is everywhere the fruitful Virgin, she produces in the depths of the soul where she dwells a purity of heart and body, a singleness of intention and purpose, and fruitfulness in good works.... She causes Jesus to live continuously in that soul and that soul to live in continuous union with Jesus.

*To sum up, Mary becomes all things for the soul that wishes to serve Jesus Christ. She enlightens his mind with her pure faith. She deepens his heart with her humility. She enlarges and inflames his heart with her charity, makes it pure with her purity, makes it noble and great through her motherly care.*⁴⁸⁷

The above mentioned details point out to the fact that the devotion of consecration to Mary enables us to live a mutual sharing of life with Mary, which in turn helps us to be united with Jesus in a perfect way and also to serve Him in a perfect manner.⁴⁸⁸

IV.2.13. Love of God is the Origin and Destination of Consecration to Mary

The Catholic population of Germany wanted to consecrate itself to the heart of the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God through its bishops during the gathering of Catholics (*Katholikentag*) in Fulda, 1954.⁴⁸⁹ Grasping this occasion, Karl Rahner highlights one of the fundamental principles in the Marian consecration, namely, that

⁴⁸⁶ Id., Pp. 256-257.

⁴⁸⁷ *Secret of Mary*, 55-57, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 276-277.

⁴⁸⁸ Cf., Stöckl, Fidelis, op. cit., P. 247.

⁴⁸⁹ Cf., Rahner, Karl, *Sämtliche Werke: Maria Mutter des Herrn: Mariologische Studien*, Bd 9, Herder Verlag, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2004, P. 595.

its origin and destination is in the love of God. According to him when we join personally in the act of consecration to Mary:

“We take into our hearts in a free and believing love, what is true and valid forever: the mercy of God, his final truth, his unconditional love that has entered into our existence. However God’s love was to come to us by giving the grace to the Virgin to receive salvation for all of us. The apostles and prophets by their faith form the foundation for the history of our salvation and for the nearness of grace. If we are already built on this foundation of faith, then we are even more built on the fact that the Blessed Virgin has spoken her glorious ‘Yes’ in obedient faith, the ‘Yes’ by which the Word became flesh and redeemed us.

It is like this. That it is like this is something that we profess whenever we recite the Apostolic Creed: born of the Virgin Mary. When we consecrate ourselves to Mary, then we profess this and realize in this the meaning of our existence. We say in believing love: you, holy Virgin, we belong together, because the mercy of God has decreed it like this; because He wants everybody to be responsible for the other; because nobody lives for himself alone. You have received our salvation with your Yes, God’s salvation and of his Christ. But the salvation that you received in your blessed womb, we have also received through you.

And we say further: Since this is your position in the origin of our salvation, therefore it cannot be different in the other less substantial things of faith and of grace. We want to ask nothing, absolutely nothing from God except what brings us closer to his eternal life – all this, however, which is leading to our eternal salvation, we expect with impetuous confidence through your hands - everything, from a small piece of bread to the peace of the world.

We say to Mary: through such a consecration we do not want to trade in a cheap way. Give us through your intercession whatever God may dispose for us, this is to say, all the incomprehensible and incalculable of his counsels and of his ways! But implore the grace for us that in everything, which he disposes for us, we may find him and not lose our souls.

We consecrate ourselves to the heart of the Blessed Virgin. This is to say: we look upon this heart, because out of this heart came Mary’s unconditional ‘Yes’ to God’s WORD - because she kept all his words in it - because it was pierced by the sevenfold sword of sorrows - because she loves us with this heart. Now she loves us as she is with God where there is no death and also no death of love. We look upon this heart, since one has to look upon the heart of every mother in order to understand her properly and to know in whom to confide in love.

Whoever builds on a foundation that has been laid by God, builds on God himself. Whoever consecrates himself to a sacred person

*and above all to the blessed Virgin, is doing this because he is lastly searching for God. We would like to be taken along to God by the pure movement of this sacred heart. And therefore a consecration to Mary has its origin and destination in the love of God. (...) In such a consecration to Mary we “only” take deep into our heart what has always been a reality, namely, “originating in the heart of God”. We do what we really always have done – or at least should have done: we love Mary.”*⁴⁹⁰

Thus as conclusion we can say: The personal consecration by an individual is regarded as the most intensive form of Marian devotion because the person who consecrates himself/herself carries out a conscious and decisive surrender of his/her life. Such an act of surrender can be directed ultimately only to the author of life, namely God, which indicates that an act of surrendering one's life finally cannot be directed towards a creature, since it is not the origin of life. Therefore, the consecration to Mary will be meaningful only in as far as the devotion of consecration to Mary leads us to commitment to God in Jesus Christ.⁴⁹¹

IV.3. Problems and Objections in Marian Consecration

The whole idea of Marian consecration was not free from criticism ever since the Reformation. There were both abuse and exaggerations in the Catholic attitude to the Mother of Jesus, which have been a very controversial issue. Mary is only a creature who was called to play the role of Mother of Jesus. Since Mary is only a creature and not a heavenly being, consecration to her by Catholics was regarded as idolatry by their opponents, because it obscured the fundamental idea of consecration to God. Thus it was considered that the Catholics often went too far in their fervour by claiming “privileges” for her that actually belonged only to her Son and to God alone.⁴⁹²

Consecrations to Mary present to the opponents further difficulties. For example the opponents are astonished by the collective consecrations done in the Catholic Church because such consecrations include non-believers.⁴⁹³ The opponents raise the following question:

*“What sense is there in such consecrations since they are not sacraments, having an **ex opere operato** value, but sacramentals*

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., Pp. 595-596, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁴⁹¹ Cf., Scheffczyk, Leo, op. cit., P. 258.

⁴⁹² Cf., Laurentin, René, *Mary's Place in the Church*, Burns & Oates, 1965, P. 5.

⁴⁹³ Cf., Ibid., P. 67.

*whose worth resides in the **opus operantis**, the free self-committal in faith of those who are consecrating themselves?”*⁴⁹⁴

There has not only been the violent opposition between Protestants and Catholics (including the Orthodox) on this subject, there has also been a divergence of attitudes within the Catholic Church itself.⁴⁹⁵ In recent years among the Mariologists there exists an opinion that the usage of the terminology “consecration” with reference to Mary is no longer acceptable. The argument is that consecration pertains to God alone and depends on his sovereign initiative and that our part can only be one of response.⁴⁹⁶ If consecration pertains to God alone then who consecrates when one offers oneself in a Marian consecration? Such doubts and objections are now attacking the long practice in the tradition of the Church. Let us therefore clear the doubts and objections by clarifying the role of God and the role of Mary in consecrations. We will also clarify the usage of the terminology of “consecration” in Marian consecration.

At the very outset of our clarification I would like to quote the words of Donal Foley, which are much thought provoking concerning the critics of Marian consecration. He says:

*“To criticize the principle of Marian consecration is also to lose sight of the central reality of the various Marian apparitions, that they concern Mary rather than Jesus. If Jesus had only wanted a consecration to his own Sacred Heart, then clearly He, rather than Mary, would have appeared repeatedly over the last few centuries. The fact that it is Mary who has appeared in so many places, and that the Church at its highest level has accepted this, indicates the importance of Mary’s role and that consecration to her is not illogical, providing it is clearly understood that “belonging to Mary is a privileged means of belonging to Christ”.”*⁴⁹⁷

It is an undeniable fact that for the past 500 years Jesus has sent His mother time and again with the wish that the entire humanity be consecrated to her Heart. One may raise the question here: Why at all Mary is brought in to play a role in the consecration? To answer this question, we need to look into the anthropological foundation of Marian Consecration according to St. Montfort.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Cf., Ibid. P. 5.

⁴⁹⁶ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 754.

⁴⁹⁷ Foley, Donal, A., *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World*, op. cit., P. 356.

IV.3.1. Anthropological Foundation of Marian Consecration

Montfort's anthropology says that human beings are radically affected by the sin of Adam in every way. He/she has become weak in all things, inconsistent at all times, unworthy of every grace and the iniquities continue to affect human beings in every sphere of their life. Montfort is convinced that the ravages and the concupiscence, which has been caused in human beings by the original sin, continue to remain even after baptism.⁴⁹⁸ He sums up these thoughts in the following words:

"Our human weakness is evident in everything we do and we are habitually unreliable. We do not deserve any grace from God. Our tendency to sin is always present. The sin of Adam has almost entirely spoiled and soured us, filling us with pride and corrupting every one of us, just as leaven sours, swells and corrupts the dough in which it is placed. The actual sins we have committed, whether mortal or venial, even though forgiven, have intensified our base desires, our weakness, our inconstancy and our evil tendencies, and have left a sediment of evil in our soul.

Our bodies are so corrupt that they are referred to by the Holy Spirit as bodies of sin, as conceived and nourished in sin, and capable of any kind of sin. They are subject to a thousand ills, deteriorating from day to day and harbouring only disease, vermin and corruption.

*Our soul, being united to our body, has become so carnal that it has been called flesh. "All flesh had corrupted its way". Pride and blindness of spirit, hardness of heart, weakness and inconstancy of soul, evil inclinations, rebellious passions, ailments of the body, - these are all we can call our own."*⁴⁹⁹

Montfort is also convinced that the fall of human being has consequences, which we human beings refuse to admit. Our union with the Lord makes us extremely sensitive to sin and to anything, which offends Jesus. The more we are in harmony with the Lord, the more we are sensitive to the shattering disharmony of sin. Montfort could not deny the "sin of the world", which is also the consequence of original sin.⁵⁰⁰ He manifests this thought in following words:

"It is difficult to persevere in holiness because of the excessively corrupting influence of the world. The world is so corrupt that it seems almost inevitable that religious hearts be soiled, if not by its

⁴⁹⁸ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignon De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., P. 138.

⁴⁹⁹ *True Devotion to Mary*, 79, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 314.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf., Id., P. 139.

mud, at least by its dust. It is something of a miracle for anyone to stand firm in the midst of this raging torrent and not be swept away; to weather this stormy sea and not be drowned, or robbed by pirates; to breathe this pestilential air and not be contaminated by it."⁵⁰¹

Though human beings are affected by the reality of the original sin, his/her final goal is Jesus, the Eternal and Incarnate wisdom. For him/her to know Jesus Christ is the only reality and everything apart from Jesus is only unreal and fake. The person who remains wretched because of the sinful life can change oneself by uniting himself/herself with Jesus. His/her weakness will be transformed into exclamations of power and joy by becoming immersed in Jesus. He is of the opinion that in Jesus Christ we can do all things and we can renew the face of the earth.⁵⁰²

*"Jesus, our Saviour, true God and true man must be the ultimate end of all our other devotions; otherwise they would be false and misleading. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end of everything. (...) In him alone we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing; he is the only teacher from whom we must learn; the only Lord on whom we should depend; the only Head to whom we should be united and the only model that we should imitate. He is the only Physician that can heal us; the only Shepherd that can feed us; the only Way that can lead us; the only Truth that we can believe; the only Life that can animate us. He alone is everything to us and he alone can satisfy all our desires. (...) Through him, with him and in him, we can do all things and render all honour and glory to the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit; we can make ourselves perfect and be for our neighbour a fragrance of eternal life."*⁵⁰³

One cannot arrive at this goal by one's own efforts because of his/her wretchedness caused by the consequences of the original sin. The loving, empowering call of Jesus falls on deaf ears because of our sin and the sin of the world. Therefore we need some help to reach this goal. He says that we need some mediator who can powerfully intercede for us and who can help us to reach this ultimate goal, who is the Mediator by Himself. Here Montfort insists on all mediators, especially the communion of saints and not Mary alone. But of all these mediators, there is no one who can be compared to the Mother of God and the Mother of human beings. Mary obviously fills this need and provides us with the

⁵⁰¹ *True Devotion to Mary*, 89, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 317-318.

⁵⁰² Cf., Id., Pp. 140-141.

⁵⁰³ *True Devotion to Mary*, 61, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 307-308.

necessary help to arrive at the Divine Wisdom, because she is the Mother of Grace and since God has given her to us as the way to Him, for she was the way for Jesus towards us.⁵⁰⁴ Montfort expresses the power of Mary's mediation in a very rich tone. He states:

*"Let us not be afraid to say with St. Bernard that we need a mediator with the Mediator himself and the divinely-honoured Mary is the one most able to fulfill this office of love. Through her, Jesus came to us; through her we should go to him. If we are afraid of going directly to Jesus, who is God, because of his infinite greatness, or our lowliness, or our sins, let us implore without fear the help and intercession of Mary, our Mother. She is kind, she is tender, and there is nothing harsh or forbidding about her, nothing too sublime or too brilliant. (...) She is so full of love that no one who asks for her intercession is rejected, no matter how sinful he may be. The saints say that it has never been known since the world began that anyone had recourse to our Blessed Lady, with trust and perseverance, and was rejected. Her power is so great that her prayers are never refused. She has but to appear in prayer before her Son and he at once welcomes her and grants her requests. He is always lovingly conquered by the prayers of the dear Mother who bore him and nourished him."*⁵⁰⁵

*"To go to Jesus, we should go to Mary, our Mediatrix of intercession. To go to God the Father, we must go to Jesus, our Mediator of redemption. This order is perfectly observed in the devotion...."*⁵⁰⁶

Montfort presents Mary as a mediator of "intercession" and Jesus as the "Mediator of redemption". When he speaks about Mary as the mediator he doesn't mean that she is the barricade, which must be pierced before arriving at the goal. He only tries to say that with Mary we arrive at Jesus more quickly, love Him more tenderly and serve Him more faithfully. In his opinion Mary is the "mysterious milieu," the atmosphere which enhances a more intense and immediate union with the Eternal and Incarnate wisdom. To withdraw oneself from this milieu, from this atmosphere, which God Himself has given to us, is to ignore her role in the salvation history. It is to ignore the fact that everyone comes to Jesus through the means He takes to come to us: **through Mary**. All this affirms the uniqueness of the one and only mediator between God and human beings. Since God has willed that Mary

⁵⁰⁴ Cf., Id., Pp. 141-142.

⁵⁰⁵ *True Devotion to Mary*, 85, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 316.

⁵⁰⁶ *True Devotion to Mary*, 86, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 316-317.

should be uniquely and eternally a part of the redemptive Incarnation by her consent, we depend on the fruit of her womb and we depend upon her eternal Fiat. Since Mary plays this role in the redemptive incarnation we can say we belong to Jesus and Mary and she has the maternal authority over us.

Montfort is convinced that, though we are in a wretched condition because of original and personal sin, we are still called to a supernatural destiny in Jesus the God-man. We are redeemed by Jesus through the cooperation with Mary and we therefore belong to them. We can neither separate Jesus from Mary nor can we pull away Mary from the redemptive incarnation and still be within the will of God. Mary was called to share in the life of God through grace and we must find this treasury of grace. Since our ultimate goal is to be one with our loving yet so exalted divine Wisdom, we have to approach Him through the Mediatrix, the means He has taken and therefore takes to come to us.

It is very obvious for us to grasp the Marian dimension in the act of consecration to Mary, because the act of consecration which Montfort has proposed is based on the logical sequence of his anthropological foundation. Montfort terms his act of consecration as a renewal of baptism. By ignoring the necessary and intrinsic element of Mary's participation in the redemption it is impossible to renew our baptism and be inserted into the life of Christ. Therefore according to his thought the act of consecration must have a Marian dimension.⁵⁰⁷ According to him, though God had no absolute need of Mary in His plan of redemption, He chose to make use of her. He is the one who freely makes Mary necessary. Therefore Mary is necessary to God by a necessity, which can be called hypothetical, in consequence of His will. Thus there is a necessary Marian dimension to the salvation history and therefore there is a necessary Marian dimension to the act of consecration.⁵⁰⁸

His consecration formula very clearly manifests the role of Mary as Mediatrix in renewing the vows of baptism.

“Eternal and incarnate Wisdom, most lovable and adorable Jesus, true God and true man, only Son of the eternal Father and of Mary always Virgin, I adore you profoundly, dwelling in the splendour of your Father from all eternity and in the virginal womb of Mary,

⁵⁰⁷ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignon De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., Pp. 143-149.

⁵⁰⁸ Cf., Ibid., P. 123.

your most worthy Mother, at the time of your incarnation. (....) I praise and glorify you for having willingly chosen to obey Mary, your holy Mother, in all things, so that through her I may be a faithful slave of love. But I must confess that I have not kept the vows and promises which I made to you so solemnly at my baptism. I have not fulfilled my obligations.... That is why I turn to the intercession and the mercy of your holy Mother, whom you yourself have given me to mediate with you. Through her I hope to obtain from you contrition and pardon for my sins, and that Wisdom whom I desire to dwell in me always."⁵⁰⁹

The anthropological foundation presented by Montfort clearly upholds the Marian dimension in the act of consecration. We can sum this up in the following words:

*"God himself confided the work of our consecration (sanctification, christification) to Mary in union with the Holy Spirit. It was for this purpose that he gave her to us as our Mother. Confident recourse to her will therefore be the best way to become gradually more and more configured to her Son, the Consecrated One."*⁵¹⁰

Thus we can conclude that Mary becomes the necessary element in the act of consecration and she serves as a unique medium in consecrating oneself to God. Her role in the act of consecration remains unavoidable.

IV.3.2. Consecration in the Proper Sense is *by* God and *to* God

One of the strong difficulties in Marian consecration is the question of understanding the theme "consecration" in the proper sense because it raises the following questions: When we speak of "consecrating oneself" to 'Mary' who is the one who consecrates? And to whom is one consecrated? The term, which is legitimately applied here, belongs to God alone in the elementary sense. Firstly, to make a consecration in the true sense can only mean to make a sacred commitment. But to speak of "consecrating oneself" really has got the touch of Pelagianism, where the role of God is laid aside or even forgotten. To assert a power of being able to "consecrate oneself" is to assert a power one does not really have because nobody can consecrate himself; only God alone can consecrate by communicating his own life to us, and he does so by a sovereign and gratuitous act of his own. If it is so then how can one consecrate oneself? Secondly there is no consecration except to God

⁵⁰⁹ *Love of Eternal Wisdom*, 223, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 112-113.

⁵¹⁰ Stöckl, *Fidelis*, op. cit., P. 230.

because He alone is holy in the transcendent sense of the word. As creatures, we belong to God alone, because He alone is the author of our life and freedom and He alone grants us our autonomous existence in its totality. Therefore any consecration to a creature would be idolatrous. To treat any creature, even the Virgin Mary, in the way God alone may be treated would be to make an idol of that creature. This fact raises the question: to whom is one consecrated in the Marian Consecration?⁵¹¹

Firstly let us answer the question: Who consecrates? It is the ultimate truth that God alone can consecrate or make holy, which cannot be denied in any form. No one can consecrate oneself because of two reasons: (1) God alone is God and only He has the power to divinize man and to invite him to have a share in His eternal life. (2) The divinization what we are speaking about here is an immediate communication of God's own life and an actualization of our life by the very act of his love. Therefore when this expression "consecrating oneself" is employed, the word is necessarily used in a more restricted meaning. This does not rule out the fact that we have to play our part in our own consecration, because consecration, being an act of love, cannot ever take place without a free response of our love; reciprocity is strictly necessary to love. God never condemns the legitimate desires of human being; He merely rectifies and fulfills them. And hence to affirm and highlight the primordial role of God in consecration does not in any way downgrade or undervalue the value of the partnership that He accords to us. God alone can communicate His sacredness to us. More than that, one can treat one's humble commitment in this regard as a sacred trust, an irrevocable commitment made to God. This is what is really meant by those who speak seriously of "consecrating themselves".

Secondly the answer to the question: to whom is one consecrated in a Marian consecration? We can say straight away: one can be consecrated only to God because God alone is the ultimate destination of human beings and only God is to be adored. However, there are ingenious ways of justifying a "consecration to Mary" by making use of the style and exaggerations of language typical when we are speaking of love. In a Marian Consecration it is possible to say that consecrations are merely addressed to her. Mary is always totally united to God anyway, and she shares everything with her Son to such a point that she too receives homage addressed to God through her hands. Marian Consecration envisages Mary as the way, the means

⁵¹¹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 92-93, 95-96.

to the Lord. Montfort says that her beauty is found in the gratuitous gift of grace which is lavished upon her by the Triune God, so that the only thing she can do is to center us in Christ. This is her Spirit filled personality. He also says that the fundamental truth of all devotion to Mary is that Jesus Christ should be the final goal and hence in a Marian consecration one is consecrated to God through Mary. Therefore it would not be wrong to stretch the concept of consecration by means of the normal analogies and metaphors of language. There is a necessity to throw light on the ways in which we may speak better of the transcendent Creator. If we do so properly, we will avoid all kinds of confusion that can cause us to forget God and his transcendent priority in every consecration.⁵¹²

IV.3.3. Mary is a Consecrated Creature par excellence and Baptism is the Basic Christian Consecration

Christian consecration is nothing else but the baptism by which one is fully consecrated to God. Through this Christian consecration-baptism, God gratuitously and generously takes possession of us once and for all. This divine consecration disposes us to receive the divine life. The possibility of consecration to anyone except God is one, with a question whether the consecration made in baptism is not sufficient. What is the point of the multiplication of consecrations to Mary? The multiplication of all these other special consecrations to Mary seems to be nothing but products of human invention. The need to add more consecrations gives the impression that this fundamental consecration-baptism has been forgotten. Since there is only one consecration, properly speaking, a divine consecration, what is the point of Marian consecration? As an answer to this question we can say: One cannot deny the truth that the basic Christian consecrations are the sacraments and baptism is a consecration par excellence. Everything else has to be grafted on to that. But there are complementary consecrations in the sacraments of confirmation and Holy Orders, which have a permanent character that is essentially a new modality of the same character given in baptism. Marian consecration is nothing but the deepening and fuller expression of these fundamental consecrations. Marian consecration helps to deepen our baptismal consecration.⁵¹³ We have already discussed about this in detail in the early part of this chapter.

⁵¹² Cf., Ibid., Pp. 97-99, ; Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignion De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., P. 117.

⁵¹³ Cf., Laurentin, René, *Mary's Place in the Church*, op. cit., P. 67, ; Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 96, 99, ; Cf., Stöckl, Fidelis, op. cit., P. 230.

At this point of the discussion it would be just enough to say: Mary is the only way to the perfect fulfillment of one's baptismal consecration because right from the first moment of her existence she was free from sin and from the clutches of Satan but above all she was perfectly united to God. Pope John Paul II explains this with following words:

*“I would like to highlight the fact that, in Saint Louis Marie’s mind, the **whole spiritual life flows directly from the sacrament of holy baptism** as is known by a significant passage of the Act of Consecration to Jesus through Mary, written precisely by Montfort... The sacramental grace of baptism wipes out original sin, but the one who receives it must also personally renounce sin, in order to respond to the grace of justification, offered to him in the faith in Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of baptism there is a certain return to the beginning, to our origins when the choice was for good, not for evil, for salvation, not rejection. If Grignion de Montfort puts this in his true devotion to the Mother of God, he does so because Mary, **by the will of God, from the moment of her Immaculate Conception, was destined in God’s plan to overcome sin** by the justification she received through the grace of Christ...: It is good for us to consider the essential meaning of the sacrament of Baptism from a Marian point of view.”⁵¹⁴*

It requires the effort of a whole life to realize the effects of Marian Consecration on our life as we live out our baptismal vows and to see it spread into the whole of one's being.

IV.3.4. Question of Terminologies: Consecration and Entrustment in Marian Consecration.

The devotion of consecration to Mary is accused as idolatry worship because of the usage of the word “consecration” with regard to Mary. Consecration pertains to God alone and one cannot be consecrated to anyone but to God. Now Mary is only a creature and not a heavenly being, consecration of oneself to her can be only regarded as idolatry. It is important to put an end to basic misunderstandings concerning the language, which are sometimes employed for consecrations. This is important not only for the sake of truth and spiritual efficaciousness but it is also important for the sake of ecumenism. During the ecumenical councils we assured our separated brothers that: Just like they understand we also understand that there is no consecration that is not a consecration to God himself and that the Virgin was merely

⁵¹⁴ To Consecrated Persons in Saint-Laurent-Sur-Sèvre (France) on Sep. 19, 1996, *Religious* Vol. IX, p. 141-142, as cited in: Stöckl, Fidelis, op. cit., Pp. 238-239.

a “means”, etc. Our separated brothers are sometimes surprised at our inconsistency because after such declarations of principle for external consumption, they observe that we continue to talk among ourselves about consecration to Mary. They wonder what can be behind such double talk. What is current and typical in the Church does not seem to be quite the same thing as what has been affirmed in ecumenical dialogue. Many efforts were carried out to remove this misunderstanding through careful studies, which have recalled in various ways the principles of what should be excluded and of what the common abuses of language consist. But still one continues to hear about “consecration to Mary”, while God fades into the background.⁵¹⁵ This indicates that there is an urgent need to purify the vocabularies used in relation to the consecration of Mary.

Pope John Paul II took serious this problem into consideration and he decided to avoid the defective formulas of the past. He started using the words *entrust* and *entrustment* to describe our relationship with Mary. Father George Kosicki, C.S.B., had done some research about the meaning of the Polish word, which was most frequently used by John Paul II, translated into Italian as “*affidare*” and into English as “*entrust*.” The Polish word used by John Paul II is *zawierzać*. Cardinal Wyszyński’s applied this same Polish word in various consecrations of Poland.⁵¹⁶ Father Kosicki shares some of his discoveries about this word in the following manner:

*“I continued to wonder about the word “entrust” until I met a priest from Poland, a colleague of the present Pope while at the University of Lublin where Karol Wojtyła taught as bishop of Krakow. I asked him about the word “entrust” and its Polish meaning, mentioning that I was disappointed that he didn’t use the word “consecrate” to Mary in his **Letter to All Priests** [of April 8, 1979]. His response was very clear and reassuring. He pointed out that the Polish word “**zawierzać**” (translated as “entrust”) is a strong word and is used for what we call in English “consecration” to Mary. He went on to say that the Polish word which is the equivalent root word to the English “consecration” (viz. “**konsekracja**”) is usually reserved for the consecration at Mass. He went further to point out that the word “entrust” was a special word for John Paul II because of the way he has used it in his Polish writings. He added that the motto of John Paul, “Totus Tuus,” (I am) all yours (Mary), means, “I consecrate myself to you, Mary” and is what Pope John Paul has in mind when he uses*

⁵¹⁵ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 118-119.

⁵¹⁶ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 755.

“*zawierzać*” (translated into English as “*entrust*”). In short the polish “to entrust” means “to consecrate.”⁵¹⁷

Father Kosicki is of the opinion that Pope John Paul II frequently used the words interchangeably along with other words such as dedicate, offer, commend, place in the hands of, etc. But Father Kosicki believes that both these terminologies- “consecration and entrustment” are not similar. He says that each word can be justified and offers shades of meaning, which are not conveyed by the other.⁵¹⁸

During the past years several first-rate Italian theologians have done some useful work on this theme. The belated Stefano de Fiores (+2012) and D. Bertetto (+1989), the president of the *Collegamento Mariano* (Marian union), Bishop F. M. Franzi, “*Consecrazione e affidamento*”, in *Miles Immaculatae* 3, 4 (1981), pp. 216-19 are included in the group. These theologians came up with a new word to make a distinction between consecration as divinization and something else. The word is called “*affidamento*”. “*Affidamento*” has the meaning of offering, confiding, or abandonment of self, that is, total self-giving. “*Affidamento*” has an exact English equivalent, namely, “*entrustment*”. On the other hand the fact that Grignion de Montfort, spoke about “consecration through Mary” was also stressed in order to provide another equal good solution. Finally it was decided that both these concepts can legitimately be applied in the case of Mary, our Mother. Though it was a good decision the consecration ceremony in 1988, at a Congress convoked in Manila scrupulously underlined the difference, by dividing the ceremony of renewing the consecration of the Philippines, into two distinct parts: a consecration to God and an entrustment to Mary.⁵¹⁹

IV.3.4.1. A Discussion on the Meaning of Consecration and Entrustment

The term “consecration” has always been in the light of its proper usage, namely the primary initiative of God in consecrating. The term “entrustment” is only suggested as an alternative. The neologism entrustment (*affidamento*) entered into the official texts of the Church from June 7, 1981 onwards. One of the important points of discussion among the theologians was: Whether this word entrustment (*affidamento*) is an exact synonym for consecration or in what sense it differs. It can

⁵¹⁷ George W. Kosicki, C.S.B., *Born of Mary: Testimonies, Teachings, Tensions* (Stockbridge, MA: Marian Press, 1985) 64, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, Loc., cit.

⁵¹⁸ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 756.

⁵¹⁹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 121-122.

be said that the word does not express a new concept in the context of acts of offering to Our Lady. Pius XII used the words *affidiamo* and *consacriamo* in his consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on October 31, 1942 and Paul VI chose the word *affidiamo* together with synonyms like *confidiamo* and *consegniamo* to describe the entrustment of our Christian commitment to Our Lady in his Prayer on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception 1975. However it is necessary to clarify the nuances conveyed by the words entrust/entrustment (*affidare/affidamento*) in order to have a precision in the meaning of the “gift of oneself to Mary”. In this theological discussion Monsignor Francesco Franzini, auxiliary bishop of Novara was the first one to note the papal preference for this term. He expresses the appropriateness of the word consecration in the following manner:⁵²⁰

“It is known that not a few objections have been made to ‘consecration to Mary’. The term ‘consecration’ summons to mind a religious content so profound that it seems to correspond uniquely to the relationship which we have with God. It refers us instinctively, in fact, to the ontological state of consecration accomplished in us by baptism which truly ‘grafts’ us into Christ and makes us ‘His’, participants in Him.... It is clear that we cannot use the term ‘consecration’ in a univocal sense—when we speak of our relationship with Mary whether in our ‘being’ or in our ‘moral conduct’. True, we have bonds with her—those which we express by affirming that Mary is Mother to us and that we are her children—, but certainly these are not identical to those which bind us to Christ....

In comparison the term ‘entrustment’ seems more suitable. It is simpler; it refers to normal relationships among men and does not immediately express a religious content which reminds us of God. Given today’s mentality, suspicious of unduly enlarging the area of the ‘religious’, it can prove to be more welcome. We must beware, however, of the risk of impoverishing the significance of ‘entrustment’ by not paying sufficient attention to that particular category of relations with Mary to which the term refers and is meant to confirm, constituting an act of faith in such relations and a coherent commitment of life. Thus it is very important to consider with care the significance which such ‘entrustment’ acquires in the discourse of the Holy Father [particularly of the morning of June 7, 1981].”⁵²¹

⁵²⁰ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 144.

⁵²¹ Francesco Maria Franzini, “ ‘Consacrazione’ o ‘affidamento’?” *Miles Immaculae* 17 (1981): 218-19 (my trans.), as cited in: *Ibid.*, P. 145.

The Bishop Franzi after analyzing the text of the “consecration” of Pentecost, 1981, which became the paradigm of the “Acts of Consecration” of May 13, 1982, and March 25, 1984, he makes the following conclusion:⁵²²

*“Those who speak of “entrustment to Our Lady” and those who speak of “consecration to Our Lady”, in substance wish to express the same reality, a relationship which one acknowledges having with the Holy Virgin and which he wishes to reaffirm. I perceive that the Holy Father himself uses the one and the other term indiscriminately, almost as if they were two synonyms, without any difference of content between the two expressions.... When we speak of “entrustment to Mary” and of “consecration to her”, in substance we intend to recognize who Mary is for us; what she does for us; who we are for her; what we, consequently, ought to do toward her.”*⁵²³

He considers the two terms are equivalent and says that the proper usage of the words “consecration” or “entrustment” is a matter of pastoral sensitivity. One should use the words in appropriate to the particular occasion. Stefano De Fiores says that the word “entrustment” brings ‘enrichment’ to the meaning because it expresses a certain attitude of interior ‘trust’, a special confidence in Mary. This is a very essential element in an act of entrustment from the part of the person who entrusts oneself. On the other hand René Laurentin, for instance, believes that the word *consecration* is not suitable to express our relationship to Mary. Because he feels that the analogical use of the term consecration confuses the theological task unnecessarily and constitutes “a scandal for the ecumenical dialogue”. He prefers rather to speak of Mary’s role in our consecration to God. Père Joseph de Sainte-Marie, O.C.D. (+ 1985) defines consecration to Mary as the covenant we make with her.⁵²⁴ He states this with the following words:

*“To consecrate oneself to Mary, as we have said, is to make a covenant with her which allows us to live more deeply that which we made with Christ in our baptism. We see clearly now the two complementary dimensions, or better, the double movement: **to give oneself to Mary in order to receive from her, through her, with her and in her the life of Christ**; and to receive from Mary the life of Christ in order to give her the glory which Christ himself wishes through her, or rather which he wishes to receive through himself in her.”*⁵²⁵

⁵²² Cf., Id., Pp. 145-146.

⁵²³ Francesco Maria Franzi, Loc. cit., 225-26, as cited in: Ibid., 146.

⁵²⁴ Cf., Id., Pp. 146-148.

⁵²⁵ Joseph de Sainte-Marie, *Teologia*, V: 11- V: 12 (my trans), as cited in: Ibid., P. 149.

Seen from the perspective of Père Joseph de Sainte-Marie's the act performed by Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1982, in Fatima was an act of '*affidamento*' of entrusting, not a consecration. Laurentin argues that the word consecration says too much but Joseph de Sainte-Marie argues that the word entrustment doesn't say enough.⁵²⁶

The issue of the usage of these terminologies in the proper manner continues to exist. There is no clear opinion when these terminologies should be appropriately used in relation to Mary and the discussion remains open. In order to have clarity about these terminologies it is necessary to take a look at their theological foundations at this stage of the discussion.

IV.3.4.2. Theological Foundations of Consecration and Entrustment

The entire salvation history is nothing but bringing humankind and the whole of creation that was secularized and profaned by sin to the original holiness. Biblically speaking consecration means to bring a person or an object into the orbit of God's holiness. Therefore consecration involves a twofold movement: to turn away from sin as the embodiment of the sinful world and at the same time turning wholeheartedly towards God.⁵²⁷ Lohkamp in the New Catholic Encyclopedia puts in very clear terms about the consecration. He says:

*"In the strict sense, consecration signifies the total dedication of a person or thing to God and His Service, and its consequent separation from ordinary human use. By the act of consecration a state or stable condition is inaugurated: what is consecrated thereafter belongs exclusively to God."*⁵²⁸

He further explains the personal consecration where he says:

*"In addition to this type of consecration, there is another that exists when an individual not only belongs to God, but also sees the relationship and is freely determined by his own choice to accept it, to live in accord with the responsibilities it imposes, and perhaps also to undertake good works or practices that are not obligatory by reason of his baptismal commitment. Thus, from the 4th century, the vow of virginity, accompanied by the liturgical blessing, was called a consecration."*⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Cf., Id., P. 149.

⁵²⁷ Cf., Stöckl, Fidelis, op. cit., Pp. 115-117.

⁵²⁸ Lohkamp, N., "*Consecration, Personal*", in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, Edited by William J, McDonald, Vol. 4, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967, P. 209.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

The same author provides us with further information, which will help us to have a good approach to the theological foundations of consecration to Mary. He says:

*“Strictly speaking, one can consecrate himself only to God, for only God has the right to man’s total dedication and service. Consecration to Christ, to the Sacred Heart, is legitimate because of the hypostatic union. But “consecration” to the Blessed Virgin, or even to St. Joseph or to other saints, is not unknown to Christian piety. In the case of St. Joseph or the other saints, this is to be understood as consecration in a broad sense of the term, and it signifies no more than an act of special homage to one’s heavenly protector. The case of the Blessed Virgin, however, is not the same. The importance of her role in Christian spirituality is such that formulas of dedication to her appear to have more profound meaning. Her position in the economy of salvation is inseparable from that of her Son. Her desires and wants are his, and she is in a unique position to unite Christians fully, quickly, and effectively to Christ, so that dedication to her is in fact dedication to Christ. French spirituality has made much of consecration to Mary. Cardinal Bérulle encouraged the vow of servitude to Jesus and Mary. St. John Eudes propagated the devotion of consecration not only to the Sacred Heart, but to the Heart of Mary as well. But the practice achieved its strongest expression in the **Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge** of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. The act of personal consecration according to Montfort is an act of complete and total consecration. It consists in giving oneself entirely to Mary in order to belong wholly to Jesus through her.”⁵³⁰*

The above description enables us to find a solution for the theological problem in relation to consecration to Mary along with two complementary lines, namely implicitly through the principle of analogy and explicitly through the principle of mediation.⁵³¹ In this chapter we will deal only about the principle of analogy whereas the unique role of Mary in the mystery of Christ and the economy of our salvation, particularly her mediation and its impact on Marian Consecration will be dealt exclusively in detail in the following chapter.

IV.3.4.2.1. The Principle of Analogy

The Catholic Encyclopedia says that “Analogy” is a philosophical term, which is used to designate:

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 757.

“First, a property of things; secondly, a process of reasoning. As a property, analogy means a certain similarity mixed with difference. This similarity may be founded entirely or chiefly upon a conception of the mind; in this sense we say that there is analogy between the light of the sun and the light of the mind, between a lion and a courageous man, between an organism and society. This kind of analogy is the source of metaphor. (...) As a process of reasoning, analogy consists in concluding from some analogical properties or similarity under certain aspects to other analogical properties or similarity under other aspects. (...) Analogical reasoning is a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning based on the principle that “analogical properties considered as similar involve similar consequences”. It is evident that analogical reasoning, as to its value, depends on the value of the analogical property on which it rests. Based on a mere conception of the mind, it may suggest, but it does not prove; it cannot give conclusions, but only comparisons. Based on real properties, it is more or less conclusive according to the number and significance of the similar properties and according to the fewness and insignificance of the dissimilar properties. From a strictly logical point of view, analogical reasoning can furnish only probable conclusions and hypotheses.”⁵³²

The Fathers of the Church emphasized that the human reason is unable to discover or even to represent adequately the mysteries of faith. Because of this reason they insisted on the necessity of analogical concepts in their expressions about the mysteries of faith. St. Thomas, has given the theory of analogy, which is applied to the mysteries of faith.⁵³³ He says:

“As a metaphysical property, analogy is not a mere likeness between diverse objects, but a proportion or relation of object to object. It is, therefore, neither a merely equivocal or verbal coincidence, nor a fully univocal participation in a common concept; but it partakes of the one and the other.”⁵³⁴

As we are discussing here about the “consecration to God” and “consecration to Mary” we can understand that in the strict sense one can consecrate oneself only to God and therefore the only possible way to speak about a common theme “consecration” in relation to God, and to Mary is only through the principle of analogy. St. Thomas and his school affirm this by declaring that:

“God is not absolutely unknowable, and yet it is true that we cannot define Him adequately. But we can conceive and name Him in an “analogical way”. The perfections manifested by creatures

⁵³² Sauvage, G.M., “Analogy”, in: <http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/a/analogy.html>, 03.07.13.

⁵³³ Cf., Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

are in God, not merely nominally (equivoco) but really and positively, since He is their source. Yet, they are not in Him as they are in the creature, with a mere difference of degree, nor even with a mere specific or generic difference (univoce), for there is no common concept including the finite and the Infinite. They are really in Him in a supereminent manner (eminenter) which is wholly incommensurable with their mode of being in creatures. We can conceive and express these perfections only by an analogy."⁵³⁵

Stefano di Fiores in the *Nuovo Dizionario di Mariologia* recommends the principle of analogy while dealing with the theme of Marian consecration. He says:

"The only way to be able to apply a term to God and to a creature is to have recourse to analogy which is based precisely on the likeness in the difference. The analogical use of consecration referred to Mary maintains a sense of "total and perpetual gift" which is required in order to bring this usage in line with the light of revelation and theology.... The gift to her is analogous to that which is made to God since it maintains the significance of the total and perpetual gift, but on the different level proper to a creature."⁵³⁶

Msgr. Calkins Burton points out that while speaking about the principle of analogy we are actually speaking in the first place of what the disciples of St. Thomas call the "analogy of attribution." Gardeil says that:⁵³⁷

"In the analogy of attribution there is always a primary (or principal) analogate (or analogue), in which alone the idea, the formality, signified by the analogous term is intrinsically realized. The other (secondary) analogates have this formality predicated of them by mere extrinsic denomination."⁵³⁸

Following the concept of analogy of attribution according to Gardeil, we can understand that the term, "consecration" signifies something, which is common to both, analogates. Here we see that the "consecration to God" is the primary analogate and the "consecration to Mary" is a secondary analogate. It denotes the recognition of our dependence on them, but since God is our Creator and Mary is a creature that dependence cannot be exactly the same. Msgr. Calkins Burton says further that the usage of the term "consecration to Mary" is also an instance of the "*analogy of*

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ "Consecrazione", in: NDM., 409, 412 (my trans); cf. also the section on the analogical use of "consecration" with regard to Mary in his *Maria nella Teologia Contemporanea*, 323-25, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 162.

⁵³⁷ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 758.

⁵³⁸ H. D. Gardeil, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas IV: Metaphysics* trans. by John A. Otto (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1967) 53, as cited in: Ibid.

proportionality". Gardeil explains this *analogy of proportionality* in the following manner.⁵³⁹

*"It will be remembered that in the analogy of attribution the (secondary) analogates are unified by being referred to a single term, the primary analogue. This marks a basic contrast with the analogy now under consideration, that of proportionality; for here the analogates are unified on a different basis, namely by reason of the proportion they have to each other. Example: in the order of knowledge we say there is an analogy between seeing (bodily vision) and understanding (intellectual vision) because seeing is to the eye as understanding is to the soul."*⁵⁴⁰

The Church and the theologians have long back recognized that there exists a certain symmetry and complementarity between Jesus and Mary. They have realized that the similarity between the privileges of Christ and those of His Mother is in no way identical. Furthermore, there is a difference in their mode and in their perfection. This is what is termed as analogy, a certain "likeness in difference." Mary is only a creature dependent on Christ for everything. She is a woman and a mother, and her grace is adapted to her own nature and to her special function. God made Christ our unique Redeemer. Mary can exercise her role as Coredemptrix only through union with Christ, and she herself had to be redeemed by Him. Christ has His prerogatives by His very nature as God Incarnate but Mary on the other hand receives hers only by a free gift of God. "He who is mighty has done great things for me." This analogy between the prerogatives of Jesus and those of Mary, the work of the filial piety of the Son of God for His Mother, was sensed already from earliest times. The principle of analogy between Jesus and Mary applies to their functions as well as to their other prerogatives.

Montfort recognized this principle of analogy already long back when he wrote: "All that is proper to God Incarnate by nature is proper to Mary by grace" (*True Devotion to Mary*, no. 74). Père Bossard, basing himself on the teaching of de Montfort, says that the consecration to Christ through Mary also implies a consecration to Mary. Therefore we can say Mary is the means or proximate end,

⁵³⁹ Cf., Id.

⁵⁴⁰ Gardeil 54, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 758.

which leads to Christ who is the final end of the consecration.⁵⁴¹ Father Neubert gave a theological exactness to the principle of analogy in this formula:

*“To the various privileges of the humanity of Jesus there correspond analogous privileges in Mary, in the manner and in the degree required by the difference between her condition and that of her Son.”*⁵⁴²

This formula appeared for the first time in the print form in the first edition of *Marie dans le Dogme* (Paris, 1933). Since then theologians started using this principle and recognized its important value.⁵⁴³

Pope John Paul II used the language of analogy while favouring the term *entrust* by using it much more frequently in his theological addresses and documents than the term *consecrate*. At the same time he doesn't forget the fact that though the principle of analogy implies likeness, it leaves ample room for non-likeness. His apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* issued on the occasion of the closing of the Marian Year affirms this very clearly.⁵⁴⁴ He says:

*“God speaks in human language, using human concepts and images. If this manner of expressing himself is characterized by certain anthropomorphism, the reason is that man is “like” God: created in his image and likeness. But then, God too is in some measure “like man”, and precisely because of this likeness, he can be humanly known. At the same time, the language of the Bible is sufficiently precise to indicate the limits of the “likeness”, the limits of the “analogy”. For Biblical Revelation says that, while man’s “likeness” to God is true, the “non-likeness” which separates the whole of creation from the Creator is **still more essentially true**. Although man is created in God’s likeness, God does not cease to be for him the one “who dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16): he is the “Different One”, by essence the “totally other”.*”⁵⁴⁵

“If God’s love for the human person, for the chosen people of Israel, is presented by the prophets as the love of the bridegroom for the bride, such an analogy expresses the “spousal” quality and the divine and non-human character of God’s love: “For your Maker is your husband ... the God of the whole earth he is called”

⁵⁴¹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 164-165, ; Cf., Samaha, John M., *Jesus – Mary Analogies*, in: http://ministryvalues.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1812&Itemid=125, 24.06.14.

⁵⁴² Samaha, John M., *Jesus – Mary Analogies*, Loc., cit.

⁵⁴³ Cf., Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 171-172.

⁵⁴⁵ *Inseg* XI: 3 (1988), 258-59, 330; *ORE* 1058:4, as cited in: Ibid., P. 172.

(Is. 54:5). The same can also be said of the spousal love of Christ the Redeemer: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (Jn. 3:16). It is a matter, therefore, of God’s love expressed by means of the Redemption accomplished by Christ. According to Saint Paul’s Letter, this love is “like” the spousal love of human spouses, but naturally it is not “the same”. For the analogy implies a likeness, while at the same time leaving ample room for non-likeness.”⁵⁴⁶

The above cited example clearly points out that Pope John Paul II speaks of entrustment to God and to Mary applying the principle of analogy and he is aware that the meaning differs proportionately. This points out to the fact that he holds Marian Consecration or Entrustment in the first instance as an act of *latria* and secondarily as an act of *hyperdulia*. The following examples make it clearer.⁵⁴⁷

“Once more I entrust you to Christ through the hands and the heart of **the Mother of God**”.⁵⁴⁸

“Therefore in particularly difficult days my thought turns to Divine Providence and, **through the intercession of the Queen of Poland, the Mother of Christ**, entrusts to it this beloved nation of mine, my homeland”.⁵⁴⁹

“I entrust your concerns and your hopes - through the hands of the **Blessed Virgin**, venerated with such love and confidence by the Rumanian ecclesiastical community - to the Almighty and Merciful Lord.”⁵⁵⁰

“And through **the motherly intercession of the Virgin of the Angels**, I entrust all of you to the goodness of God.”⁵⁵¹

“I entrust you to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, through the mediation of his Mother, who is also our Mother.”⁵⁵²

“Our Lady of Peace, once again we entrust to you the Church of this diocese, of all the dioceses of this country. Through your mediation we consecrate them to your Son.”⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁶ *Inseg* XI: 3 (1988), 301, 366; *ORE* 1058:11. In this case the Latin word rendered into English as “analogy” is *comparatio*, but the text still serves admirably as a depiction of the classic scholastic concept of analogy, likeness in difference. As cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 172.

⁵⁴⁷ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 175.

⁵⁴⁸ *Inseg* I (1978), 57; *Talks*, 118, as cited in: *Ibid*.

⁵⁴⁹ *Inseg* IV: 2 (1981), 1279, 1280-81; *ORE* 717:14, as cited in: *Id*.

⁵⁵⁰ *Inseg* V: 1 (1982), 52; *ORE* 724:12, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 175.

⁵⁵¹ *Inseg* V: 1 (1982), 854; *ORE* 728:10, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 176.

⁵⁵² *ORE* 1157:13, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 176.

⁵⁵³ *ORE* 1215:1, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 176.

Referring to the consecration of March 24, 1984, during his annual visit to the Church of the Gesù on New Year's Eve in the same year, he says about the *latria* and *hyperdulia* aspect in consecration to Mary, in a short and clear way.⁵⁵⁴

*"This Act of Consecration was a drawing nearer of the world, through the Mother of Christ and Our Mother, to the source of life, poured out on Golgotha: it was a bringing back of the world to the same fount of Redemption, and at the same time, a recourse to the Madonna's help in order to offer men and peoples to him who is infinitely holy."*⁵⁵⁵

Thus we see that the principle of analogy helps us to discover the theological truths implicitly contained in Marian consecration. Without this principle of analogy⁵⁵⁶ it would have been impossible to understand Marian consecration properly. Indeed it helps us to understand the undeniable fact, as the great St. Montfort says:

*"We consecrate ourselves at one and the same time to Mary and to Jesus. We give ourselves to Mary because Jesus chose her as the perfect means to unite himself to us and unite us to him. We give ourselves to Jesus because he is our last end."*⁵⁵⁷

At this point of our discussion one can raise the question: Why should there be an explicit entrustment to Mary? Pope John Paul II has developed his own spirituality and theology of entrustment. Let us briefly go through his theology of entrustment in order to answer the above-cited question.

IV.3.4.2.2. Pope John Paul II's theology of Entrustment to Mary based on Jn: 19: 25-27

In Marian consecration, Mary is the most direct way to Jesus for Montfort; going through Mary maximizes the values of all our acts for Kolbe; but for John Paul II it is the will of Christ that we belong to her. He says to consecrate ourselves to her is to consecrate ourselves to Him by the means which He has designated. The Pope constantly insisted on the entrustment scene on Calvary (Jn: 19: 25-27). In this episode of Christ's entrustment of John to Mary he finds the reason for the

⁵⁵⁴ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 177.

⁵⁵⁵ *Inseg* VII: 2 (1984), 1684; *ORE* 869:4, in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 177-178.

⁵⁵⁶ But unfortunately today this classical Catholic principle is more and more being questioned and it has turned out to be a basic block in Catholic theology. Indeed even authors like De Fiores distanced themselves from it. (Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 759.)

⁵⁵⁷ *True Devotion to Mary*, 125, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 328.

entrustment of all of Christ's followers to her.⁵⁵⁸ He speaks of her as the one "to whose loving patronage God himself willed to entrust, through her obedient 'Yes', the fate of the whole of mankind."⁵⁵⁹

The Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* of March 25, 1987 clearly indicates how he based his teaching and practice in the entrusting of John to Mary and Mary to John on Calvary. It is the most authoritative and comprehensive exposition of his theology of entrustment. It also explains the intimate relationship, which Jesus wishes us to have with his mother.⁵⁶⁰

*"The Redeemer entrusts his mother to the disciple, and at the same time he gives her to him as his mother. Mary's motherhood, which becomes man's inheritance, is a gift: a gift which Christ himself makes personally to every individual. The Redeemer entrusts Mary to John because he entrusts John to Mary. At the foot of the Cross there begins that special entrusting of humanity to the Mother of Christ, which in the history of the Church has been practiced and expressed in different ways. The same Apostle and Evangelist, after reporting the words addressed by Jesus on the Cross to his Mother and to himself, adds: "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (Jn. 19:27). This statement certainly means that the role of son was attributed to the disciple and that he assumed responsibility for the Mother of his beloved Master. And since Mary was given as a mother to him personally, the statement indicates, even though indirectly, everything expressed by the intimate relationship of a child with its mother. And all of this can be included in the word "entrusting". Such entrusting is the response to a person's love and in particular to the love of a mother."*⁵⁶¹

It is fitting to note here a remarkable fact in the teaching of Pope John Paul II who says that our filial relationship with Mary through self-entrusting to her will finally be oriented to Christ himself. In this teaching we see the two dimensions of entrustment, namely "descending entrustment" and "ascending entrustment".

a. Descending entrustment

Christ's entrustment of every human being can be meditated as descending entrustment. Jesus entrusted John to Mary and Mary to John. Cardinal Wojtyla spoke

⁵⁵⁸ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 262, 266.

⁵⁵⁹ *Inseg* II: 1 (1979), 1054; *ORE* 582:3, in: *Ibid.*, P. 222.

⁵⁶⁰ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 726.

⁵⁶¹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 45, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 25.06.13.

about it already in a homily at Jasna Góra on the Feast of Our Lady, Queen of Poland, in 1968⁵⁶², where he said:

*“From the height of the Cross **the Son of God entrusted to the Mother a great mission**: to express the love of the Father, to express His own love linked to His martyrdom and to His death on the Cross linked to His Resurrection.”*⁵⁶³

He emphasizes that in John, the beloved disciple “every man discovers that he is a child of the one who gave the world the Son of God.”⁵⁶⁴ His theology of entrustment can be deeply felt in his speech to the youth at Jasna Góra in 1983 with reference to John 19: 26.⁵⁶⁵

“We believe that, in that one man [John], Christ entrusted to her [Mary] every human being, and at the same time awoke in her heart a love which is a maternal reflection of his own redemptive love.

*We believe that we are loved by this love, surrounded by it, that is, by the love of God, which was revealed in the Redemption by means of the Cross, and finally by the love of the Mother, who stood beneath the Cross and who from the Heart of her Son accepted into her heart every human being.”*⁵⁶⁶

In a prayer for vocations in Bologna in the year 1982 he brought out an important aspect of Mary in our entrustment. He requests Mary to unite our consecration to that of Jesus and to her own. This would also find an echo in the acts of consecration prayer at Fatima in the same year and also in the year 1984 after citing the text about Christ’s self consecration (Jn 17:19) and our desire to unite ourselves to it.⁵⁶⁷

*“We entrust our life to you, to you who welcomed the Word of God with absolute fidelity and **dedicated yourself to his plan of salvation and grace**, acceding to the action of the Holy Spirit with total docility; to you who had from your Son the mission of **receiving and caring for the disciple whom he loved** (cf. Jn. 19:26); to you, each and every one of us repeats, “**Totus tuus ego sum**” (I am all yours), that you may take our consecration and*

⁵⁶² Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 223.

⁵⁶³ *Omellie*, 24, as cited in: Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ *Inseg XII*: 1 (1989), 552; *ORE* 1081:1, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 223.

⁵⁶⁵ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 223.

⁵⁶⁶ *Inseg VI*: 1 (1983), 1563; *ORE* 791: 3, as cited in: Ibid., P. 224.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf., Id., P. 224.

unite it to that of Jesus and yours, as an offering to God the Father for the life of the world."⁵⁶⁸

In all these prayers and teaching the Pope always affirms that in the act of consecration or entrusting the initiative is first taken by God and not by human beings. In the words of the Fr. Domenico Bertetto, S.D.B., we can say that consecration is above all a descending consecration because it is God who takes the initiative to communicate His perfections, His authority, His Holiness and His powers to His creatures. The Pope insists that in the entrustment on Calvary in the first instance it is Christ Himself who entrusts us to Mary. It is Christ who, by entrusting John to Mary, has entrusted us all to her. He further insists that entrustment is not only willed by Christ but also has Him as its final end. He is both its *terminus a quo* and its *terminus ad quem*. This he puts in great clarity with the following words in *Redemptoris Mater*.⁵⁶⁹

*"This filial relationship, this self-entrusting of a child to its mother, not only has its **beginning in** Christ but can also be said to be **definitively directed towards him**. Mary can be said to continue to say to each individual the words which she spoke at Cana in Galilee: "Do whatever he tells you."(....) For every Christian, for every human being, Mary is the one who first "believed," and **precisely with her faith as Spouse and Mother she wishes to act upon all those who entrust themselves to her as her children. And it is well known that the more her children persevere and progress in this attitude, the nearer Mary leads them to the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8).**"*⁵⁷⁰

Thus the entrustment, which comes from God to human beings, can be termed as descending entrustment.

b. Ascending Entrustment

The ascending entrustment is derived from the descending entrustment. Fr. Domenico Bertetto, S.D.B., distinguishes between the descending and ascending consecration in the following manner:

*"The consecration **descending** from God implies also on that account a consecration **ascending** from the creature, conscious*

⁵⁶⁸ *Inseg* V: 1 (1982), 1217; *ORE* 731: 6, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 224.

⁵⁶⁹ Cf., *Ibid.*, Pp.227- 228, 238.

⁵⁷⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 46, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 25.06.13.

and free, who recognizes his belonging to God and therefore commits himself to be God's, entrusted to God, put at the service of God, according to the requirement of the consecration received, under the efficacious influence of the Spirit.

*Every ascending consecration, which John Paul II likes to call **entrustment** in order to distinguish it from descending consecration, sets out from the recognition of the relations which link the consecrated person to the One to whom he is consecrated.*"⁵⁷¹

The distinction made by Fr. Bertetto helps us to understand the descending entrustment and the ascending entrustment in our consideration about consecration/entrustment very clearly. The descending entrustment is the divine initiative, which is taken by Christ Himself, in entrusting Mary to human beings from the Cross (Jn: 19: 26-27). This Primary Marian entrustment, which comes from Christ, has to be complemented by an 'ascending' entrustment on our part. This ascending entrustment refers to the disciple's relationship to Mary. In other words it refers to accepting Mary into our lives and entrusting everything, which belongs to us, to her in order to belong to Christ through her. The ascending entrustment is one of the fundamental perspectives to Pope John Paul II. In his speech outside the Cathedral of Turin on April 13, 1980 Pope John Paul II clearly relates both the entrustments in the following way.⁵⁷²

*"Our hearts do not forget that she was standing by the cross of Jesus (cf. Jn. 19:25): **stabat Mater dolorosa**. Nor can we forget that, from the Cross, **Jesus looked at his mother and John**, the disciple whom he loved, and, as to a special witness, indicated to the disciple Mary, as Mother, **and entrusted the disciple to his Mother**: "Behold, your mother!" "Woman, behold your son!" (Jn. 19:27, 26). We believe that in this one man, precisely in John, Jesus indicated Mary as Mother of every man - **He entrusted everyone to her, as if every man were her child, her son or her daughter**.*

From this fact is derived the particular necessity that we - obedient to these words of Christ's testament - should entrust ourselves and everything that belongs to us, to Mary.

Letting myself be guided by this faith and at the same time by this hope, today I wish to renew what is part of Christ's paschal

⁵⁷¹ Domenico Bertetto, S.D.B., "Consacrazione e affidamento: Senso ed esigenze dell' affidamento a Maria", in *L'Affidamento a Maria*, ed. Bertetto (Romei Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1984), 75-76 (my trans.). This thesis is also espoused by other members of the Salesian family including its Rector Major, Egidio Viganö, see De Fiores, *Maria nella Teologia Contemporanea*, 331-33, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 227.

⁵⁷² Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 238-239.

testament and entrust to the Mother of God this city and this Church which welcomes me as a pilgrim today....

O Mother, may this prayer and this abandonment, which we renew once more, tell you everything about us."⁵⁷³

According to Pope John Paul II entrusting oneself totally to Mary is nothing but welcoming or accepting Mary into our lives. This notion of "welcoming Mary" is very well expressed by the Pope not only in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, but also in *Redemptoris Mater*. In his first encyclical he says:⁵⁷⁴

*"Her Son explicitly extended his Mother's maternity in a way that could easily be understood by every soul and every heart by designating, when he was raised on the Cross, his beloved disciple as her son. The Holy Spirit inspired her to remain in the Upper Room, after our Lord's Ascension, recollected in prayer and expectation, together with the Apostles, until the day of Pentecost, when the Church was to be born in visible form, coming forth from darkness. Later, all the generations of disciples, of those who confess and love Christ, like the Apostle John, spiritually took this Mother to their own homes."*⁵⁷⁵

The Pope deepens this thought in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* in the following manner:

*"The Marian dimension of the life of a disciple of Christ is expressed in a special way precisely through this filial entrusting to the Mother of Christ, which began with the testament of the Redeemer on Golgotha. Entrusting himself to Mary in a filial manner, the Christian, like the Apostle John, "welcomes" the Mother of Christ "into his own home" and brings her into everything that makes up his inner life, that is to say into his human and Christian "I": he "took her to his own home." Thus the Christian seeks to be taken into that "maternal charity" with which the Redeemer's Mother "cares for the brethren of her Son," "in whose birth and development she cooperates" in the measure of the gift proper to each one through the power of Christ's Spirit. Thus also is exercised that motherhood in the Spirit which became Mary's role at the foot of the Cross and in the Upper Room".*⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷³ *Inseg* III: 1 (1980), 891-93; *ORE* 629:2, (author's emphasis), as cited in: *Ibid.*, P. 239.

⁵⁷⁴ Cf., *Id.*, Pp. 240, 243.

⁵⁷⁵ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, No. 22, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html, 06.07.13.

⁵⁷⁶ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 45, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 06.07.13.

His homily at Fatima on May 13, 1982 is an excellent exposition of the spiritual and the pastoral meaning of John 19:27:

“The words “he took her to his own home” can be taken in the literal sense as referring to the place where he lived.

Mary’s motherhood in our regard is manifested in a particular way in the places where she meets us: her dwelling places; places in which a special presence of the mother is felt.

There are many such dwelling places. They are of all kinds: from a special corner in the home or little wayside shrines adorned with an Image of the Mother of God, to chapels and churches built in her honor. However, in certain places the Mother’s presence is felt in a particularly vivid way. These places sometimes radiate their light over a great distance and draw people from afar. Their radiance may extend over a diocese, a whole nation, or at times over several countries and even continents. These places are the Marian sanctuaries or shrines.

*In all these places that unique testament of the crucified Lord is wonderfully actualized: in them man feels that he is entrusted and confided to Mary; he goes there in order to be with her, as with his Mother; he opens his heart to her and speaks to her about everything: he **“takes her to his own home”, that is to say, he brings her into all his problems, which at times are difficult. His own problems and those of others. The problems of the family, of societies, of nations and of the whole community.***⁵⁷⁷

In his address to a large number of priests belonging to the Focolari Movement he gave a new interpretation to receiving Mary. The Pope requests the priests to receive her as guide, as adviser, as encourager or even merely as a silent presence, in other words to receive her as one of his spiritual goods.⁵⁷⁸

*“The Gospel text just cited offers us the model for our devotion to Mary. And from that hour the disciple took “her to his own home” (Jn. 19:27). Can the same be said of us? **Do we also welcome Mary into our homes? Indeed, we should grant her full rights in the home of our lives, of our faith, of our affections, of our commitments, and acknowledge the maternal role that is hers, that is to say, her function as guide, as adviser, as encourager, or even merely as a silent presence which at times may of itself be enough to infuse us with strength and courage.(....) And at the same time she can teach us to be open to the Holy Spirit, to share anxiously Christ’s total dedication to the will of the Father; above all she can teach us to participate deeply in the passion of the Son***

⁵⁷⁷ *Inseg V: 2 (1982), 1568, 1578; Portugal, 73, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, Totus Tuus, op. cit., Pp. 243-244.*

⁵⁷⁸ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, Pp. 244-245.

and carry out our ministry with assured spiritual fruitfulness. "Behold, your mother!" (Jn. 19:27). Everyone feels that these words are addressed to him, and therefore draws faith and enthusiasm from them...."⁵⁷⁹

Pope John Paul II emphasizes the necessity of the ascending entrustment from the part of Christ's disciple in his Angelus address of January 3, 1988 and says that it is the only response adequate to the love of a mother.⁵⁸⁰ He says:

*"What, then, should be our attitude towards her whom Jesus himself gave us as our mother? Our attitude cannot be other than that of the Apostle John, of whom it was said, "From that moment the disciple took her to his own house" (Jn. 19:27). To accept Mary in our lives, entrusting ourselves totally to her: this is what Our Lady expects of each of us. Entrustment is the only response adequate to the love of a Person, in particular to the love of a mother."*⁵⁸¹

As conclusion to the reflection on the ascending entrustment I would like to quote the very words of the Pope, which he spoke on the theme "Behold your Mother" on November, 1988.

*"John's action (of taking Mary into his own home) was the execution of Jesus' testament in regard to Mary; but it had a symbolic value for each one of Christ's disciples, who are asked to make room for Mary in their lives, to take her into their own homes. By virtue of these words of the dying Christ, every Christian life must offer a "space" to Mary and provide for her presence."*⁵⁸²

IV.3.5. Consecration of Infants to Mary is Legitimate

In our above discussion on consecration/entrustment we understood the importance of one's response in consecration to the divine initiative. Human beings can only "formally cooperate" in our own consecration. This cooperation is the irreplaceable work of our own faith and our own liberty responding to the divine liberty. The problem that can be raised here, is the question: Since the children cannot make their own choice, how can the consecration of Infants to Mary be a legitimate one? To give an appropriate answer to this question, we should consider some respectable features of the Christian Tradition. In many Christian families there is the custom of consecrating or offering the children to the Blessed Mother immediately after their baptism, as a sign that they belong to their Mother in heaven

⁵⁷⁹ *Inseg* V: 1 (1982), 1370-71; *ORE*, 736: 12, as cited in: *Ibid*.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, P. 239.

⁵⁸¹ *Inseg* XI: 1 (1988), 14; *ORE* 1021: 3, in: *Ibid*.

⁵⁸² *Inseg* XI: 4 (1988), 1638; *ORE* 1066: 16, in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 248.

(for example: the custom of consecrating infants at the church in Kuravilangad in Kerala in South India).⁵⁸³ This kind of dedication is usually to be found as some kind of extension of baptism. Through baptism, little children become children of the Father in heaven through Jesus Christ and by this consecration they also become children of Mary. The argument here is: Do parents have the right to do this? In the beginning stage of their life children cannot make their own choice about going to school, about reading and writing and about their education. Parents make the choices and decisions for their children. They who have given life to their children owe them everything else necessary to ensure that their biological life will become a properly developed human life. The same parents have an obligation also to help their children achieve their share of the divine life. Mary is our powerful Mother; it is both sensible and judicious to confide to her the difficult task of education, so that she may aid our human weakness. The benefits of infant consecration to Mary are not as easily demonstrated because the result is a deepening of the spiritual life.

In Luke 2:51 we read that Jesus remained under the protection of Mary and was obedient to her, and thus increased in wisdom and grace. This reflects what happens in the consecration of the infants, namely, Mary in union with the Holy Spirit continually forms us into her Son, Jesus. One should not forget that what

⁵⁸³ The land of Kuravilangad is blessed by the esteemed presence of St. Mary's Forane Church, which was built in 105 A.D (just one hundred years before Constantine declared Christianity as the official religion in the Roman Empire). It is believed, that Mother Mary's first appearance in the world was in Kuravilangad. Our Lady appeared to a few children at Kuravilangad, who were tending their flock in the bushes. Our Lady asked them to build a church at the place from where a miraculous perpetual spring sprouted, the children reported the events to the elders and a church was built there. Martha Mariam church is the ancestral home of Christian communities in Kerala and outside the State. It is in Meenachil Taluk, 22 kms north of Kottayam, on the Eastern side of M.C. Road. Martha Mariam Church belongs to the diocese of Palai. Traditional beliefs, some legendary factors and historical associations contribute to the actual history of the church. It is believed that four Christian families - viz. Palli (Kalli), Kaliyakal (Kalikavu), Sankarapuri and Pakalomattam from Palayur arrived at Ettumanoor and they moved to Kalikavu near Kuravilangad in the beginning of the second century. (...) The present church was completed in 1960 when Rev. Fr. Thomas Manakattu was the parish priest. (*St. Mary's Forane Church, Kuravilangad*, in: <http://www.kuravilangadpally.com/contentpage.aspx?pid=History>, 06.07.13.). In this Kuravilangad Church there is a Marian Altar built above the Fountain.

In my interview with the rector of this shrine, Fr. Joseph Malayaparambil in October, 2009 in the presbytery of the shrine at Kuravilangad, he told me that Mary appeared here several times between the years 335-337 and asked them to build a church at the place from where a miraculous spring gushed out. A church was built as per the wish of the Blessed Mother. Since 345 this church was dedicated to Blessed Virgin Mary and people started paying homage to her since then. He explained to me that the parents bring their children wrapped in a linen cloth to the altar of Mary soon after the baptism. They place their children on the altar of Mary and consecrate them as "Handmaid of Mary" or as "slave of Mary". In the local language this tradition is known as "*adima vaippu*". Through this consecration the parents entrust their children, their education, and their entire life to Mary and they invoke the protection and blessings for their children. Every year on the day of baptism this consecration is renewed by their parents at the altar of Mary in front of her statue. This practice exists in this church since the 16th century onwards.

happens in the infant consecration is only an act of entrustment done by the parents for their children asking for protection, care and blessings for their children. Thus consecration of infants to Mary is a long traditional practice in the Church and this practice can be considered as a legitimate one.⁵⁸⁴

IV.3.6. Collective Consecration is a votive and not a Formal Consecration

God is the Creator of freedom. He does nothing with us and nothing to us without our consent. He saves us by means of love, which calls for reciprocity. He wants us to be freely involved in and committed to his work. At the same time He has also associated his Mother with everything he does. The centre of his love is actually to be found within our own freedom, which, however, can accept, refuse, or neglect that love. Based on these truths we can say true consecration is made with love, liberty, and reciprocity. If this is true then how can consecrating others, consecrating foreign nations, including those officially hostile to God and the Church, such as Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary can be considered as a true consecration? Is it possible to do it without disrespecting the liberty and freedom of others? To answer this problem one can say a bold and a positive ‘Yes’, in the measure that one has responsibility for others. Parents have responsibility for their children, and authorities of the state and church have responsibility for their subjects, their Citizens, according to their various competencies. For example King Louis XIII possessed the authority to dedicate France “to the grandeur of God through Mary”. The French people ardently consented to such a proceeding, and the formula employed by the king was theologically irreproachable. Just like a King has authority over his nation, a bishop too has this kind of authority over his diocese, as the pope has over the universal Church, indeed, over the whole world. Though these arguments and examples sounds legitimate, the question remains: what type of consecration it would be, because it is external and even strange and unfamiliar to some of those intended to be consecrated by it? A clear understanding of the distinction between “formal consecration” and “votive consecration” would help us to give a suitable answer to this question.⁵⁸⁵

It is an undeniable truth that: neither parents, nor godparents, nor the pope, can confer a formal consecration on others against their will or without their personal

⁵⁸⁴ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 100-101.

⁵⁸⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 96-97.

involvement. The desire of God is that all should be saved and for this purpose He has given to the Church the mission of evangelizing the whole world. The Church, in turn, is obliged to work in accordance with the design of God, and this includes the desire that all should be consecrated for their own good. Such a consecration is called *votive* consecration. The votive act does not take away the liberty of those who have been confided to the care of God. This votive act is also in conformity with human solidarity. In our world we experience that human beings do not hesitate to mobilize for great humanitarian causes in order to provide help and assistance to those who are in distress and in need. If firemen or physicians can thus be mobilized to provide help to others, why in the world can God not be mobilized? From this argument, we can draw out the conclusion that *votive* consecrations really have the character of a prayer of intercession, and this is completely in agreement with the tradition of the Church. The aim of such votive consecrations is to get the most efficacious aid namely that of God, who alone knows what constitutes our true good. God who created us to be in solidarity with one another and it is His will that we should not resist helping those who are in need of help or those who are in danger.

The history of the Church tells us that the popes hesitated for a long time before deciding to make votive consecrations. They feared the possibility of committing unnecessary errors by making them. **Pope Pius IX** consecrated the whole human race on June 16, 1875. But before doing this consecration he framed the consecration prayer as a proposal, which was to be personally confirmed, agreed by the Catholics of the world and it has to be judged as irrevocable. Catholics were invited to approve the pope's act by using statements such as "I consecrate myself", "I declare", and "I lay down".⁵⁸⁶

Pope Leo XIII consecrated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the year 1899 for the Holy Year. He established the devotion and the consecration on the solid basis of powerful transcendence of the Divine Love, symbolized by the Heart of Jesus.⁵⁸⁷ While making the consecration in the encyclical *Quas Primas* he added the statement:

"The sentiment of piety that their face inspires in us impels us more urgently than ever to commend them to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and insofar as the power resides in us to do so, we do therefore

⁵⁸⁶ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 101-103.

⁵⁸⁷ Cf., Ibid., P. 104.

consecrate them equally."⁵⁸⁸

Through this act the pope "commended" to God those who appeared to be in darkness. His formula of consecration was even more prudent because everyone who was reciting it committed only himself. Thus:⁵⁸⁹

*"Most Sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Thy altar. We are Thine, and Thine we wish to be; but to be more surely united with Thee, behold each one of us freely consecrates himself today to Thy Most Sacred Heart."*⁵⁹⁰

The Pope's statement in the prayer: "*Be Thou King, O Lord . . . and make the earth resound from pole to pole with one cry*"⁵⁹¹ which followed thereafter is like a prayer of entreaty, addressed to Christ. This prayer manifests our human solidarity and the normal desire we have for the good of others. But above all it manifests the finality of the Incarnation for which Christ gave up his life. Christ himself formulated a consecration that was itself both votive and a prayer of entreaty before offering Himself on the cross. In His prayer addressed to the Father, Christ prays in the following words: "*And for their sake I consecrate [hagiazō] myself, that they also may be consecrated [hagiasmenoi] in truth*" (Jn 17:19). Thus Christ, who is God, consecrated himself. This prayer of Christ is not a consecration, because Christ only makes a request to the Father, who is both the ultimate principle and final term of all consecrations. It is a prayer of entreaty, imploring God's conquering love upon the entire human race in which even omnipotence does not control and limit the liberty of the others. **Pope John Paul II** made a good decision by basing himself on this scriptural text in order to renew the consecrations that had been made by his predecessors. He began each renewal of the consecrations by citing John 17:19 and then followed up by commenting on this scriptural passage in this manner: "In virtue of this consecration, disciples of all times and historical periods are called to spend themselves for the salvation of the world and thereby add on something to the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body the Church" (cf. Col 1:24).⁵⁹² There were all together three-consecration renewals, which took place on: May 13, 1982, October 16, 1983, and March 24, 1984. But his consecration prayer on March 24,

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., Pp. 104-105.

⁵⁸⁹ Cf., Ibid., P. 105.

⁵⁹⁰ Sacred Heart Encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI, New York: America Press, 1953, pp. 13f, as cited in: Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., P. 14, as cited in: Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 105.

⁵⁹² Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 105-107.

1984 is the best example for a votive consecration.

“Behold, as we stand before you, Mother of Christ, before your Immaculate Heart, we desire, together with the whole Church, to unite ourselves with the consecration which, for love of us, your Son made of himself to the Father: “For their sake,” he said, “I consecrate myself that they also may be consecrated in the truth” (Jn 17:19). We wish to unite ourselves with our Redeemer in this his consecration for the world and for the human race, which, in his divine heart, has the power to obtain pardon and to secure reparation.

The power of this consecration lasts for all time and embraces all individuals, peoples and nations. It overcomes every evil that the spirit of darkness is able to awaken, and has in fact awakened in our times, in the heart of man and in his history.

How deeply we feel the need for the consecration of humanity and the world - our modern world - in union with Christ himself! For the redeeming work of Christ must be shared in by the world through the Church. (...). Hail to you, who are wholly united to the redeeming consecration of your Son!

Mother of the Church! Enlighten the People of God along the paths of faith, hope, and love! Enlighten especially the peoples whose consecration and entrustment by us you are awaiting. Help us to live in the truth of the consecration of Christ for the entire human family of the modern world.

In entrusting to you, O Mother, the world, all individuals and peoples, we also entrust to you this very consecration of the world, placing it in your motherly heart.

Immaculate Heart! Help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths towards the future!”⁵⁹³

This part of the consecration prayer of the Pope also highlights the theology of collective consecration. The emphasis of Mary’s unique role in the redemption tells us that her mediatory function is not limited only to Catholics or Christians. The entire humanity is committed silently (*modo tacito*) to her mediation.⁵⁹⁴

To conclude our discussion on this topic we can say that every human being

⁵⁹³ John Paul II’s Consecration of the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in: <http://www.motherofallpeoples.com/2006/05/john-paul-ii-s-consecration-of-the-world-to-the-immaculate-heart-of-mary/>, 06.07.13.

⁵⁹⁴ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 281.

right from a simple farmer to the Pope has the responsibility to take up and extend the entreaty of Christ. By doing so we are neither violating nor overtaking the liberty of the others. And hence such acts of consecration remain as votive consecrations. However the fact remains that everybody retains the personal power to accept or reject God's love and to consent to his grace. Effective consecration can take place only through the grace of God and with the free consent of each person.⁵⁹⁵

No matter how much efforts are put in clarifying all these doubts, objections and problems with appropriate theological insights, the difficulties concerning the Marian consecration continue to exist. Tradition has passed on to us very noble things regarding consecration to Mary but unfortunately due to the extreme secularization of this world the important truths hidden in Marian Consecration are rejected without proper investigation and enlightenment. In spite of the perennial difficulties, the Popes have never stopped the faithful from following this devotional practice of Marian Consecration. In their exhortations they recommended unceasingly the importance and the practice of this devotion. Now let us take a look at their teachings on this topic to draw out certain inspirations from them.

IV.4. Marian Consecration in the Papal Magisterium

The devotion of the Marian consecration was mainly promoted by the popes of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty first centuries. The first encouragement to the faithful came through the acknowledgment of the classical work of St. Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary*. The Popes of the last one hundred and fifty years encouraged the faithful to read the *True Devotion to Mary* and to make the act of total consecration to Mary as prescribed by St. Montfort. Some of the examples are as follows.⁵⁹⁶

Blessed Pope Pius IX declared that True Devotion to Mary to be free from all doctrinal error and referred to St. Montfort's devotion to Mary as the best and most acceptable form of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This papal pronouncement was a reaffirmation of the official declaration by the Holy See in the year 1853 as a

⁵⁹⁵ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 107.

⁵⁹⁶ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 164.

part of the process of the saint's beatification that the works of St. Louis Marie de Montfort were free from error.⁵⁹⁷

Pope Leo XIII encouraged all faithful to make De Montfort's act of consecration. He granted a plenary indulgence to those who make St. Louis de Montfort's act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin. He granted the indulgence for seven years. In July, 1903, as ninety-four-year-old on his deathbed, he renewed the act of consecration to our Blessed Lady, the essence of True Devotion. In his prayer he requested St. De Montfort, whom he had beatified in 1888, to help him.⁵⁹⁸

Pope St. Pius X in 1904 wrote an encyclical to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the definition of the Immaculate Conception. He declared about his dependence on St. Montfort's *True Devotion* in the composition of this Marian encyclical. His encyclical *Ad diem illum* echoes beautifully the strains of St. De Montfort's book. He granted a plenary indulgence "in Perpetuum" to those who recite St. Montfort's formula of act of consecration. Pope St. Pius X later heartily recommended *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, to the faithful and assured his apostolic Benediction to all who read it.⁵⁹⁹

Pope Benedict XV declared in his letter to the Superior General of the Montfort Fathers on the occasion of the second centenary of the death of their founder that the True Devotion is a book "of great unction and high authority." Berthe Petit, a Franciscan Tertiary was known for her devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She came up with a petition to the pope requesting him to consecrate the world to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary. As a response to this petition, Benedict wrote a letter to the dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals on May 31, 1915, eight days after Italy had entered World War I. He concluded with an exhortation to invoke Mary's Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart.⁶⁰⁰

Pope Pius XII canonized St. De Montfort on July 20, 1947. He declared that the Marian spirituality of this saint to be "consuming, solid and right." In the month

⁵⁹⁷ Cf., Ibid., ; Cf., Gaffney, Patrick,J., *The Holy Slavery of Love*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op.cit., P. 159.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf., Id., ; Cf., the foot note no. 86, in: Gaffney, Patrick,J., *The Holy Slavery of Love*, Loc. cit., P. 160, ; Cf., Beckman, Joseph F., *True Devotion: The Book and the Practice*, in: <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=7201>, 08.07.13.

⁵⁹⁹ Cf., Beckman, Joseph F., Loc. cit., ; Cf., Gaffney, Patrick,J., Loc. cit.

⁶⁰⁰ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 165, ; Cf., Gaffney, Patrick,J., Loc. cit., ; Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 91.

of June, 1938, prompted by Father Pinho, S.J., the spiritual director of Alexandria Maria da Costa, the bishops of Portugal wrote to Pius XI requesting him to consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But before he could do that he died on February 10, 1939 and was succeeded by Pius XII in that same year. Since then there was a cumulative impulse for the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As a response to this cumulative impulse Pope Pius XII, gave a radio broadcast to pilgrims who at Fatima were celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the 1917 apparitions. He prayed the following prayer at the conclusion of the broadcast:⁶⁰¹

*“To you and to your Immaculate Heart, we, the common father of the vast Christian family, we, the vicar of him to whom was given “all power in heaven and on earth,” and from whom we have received the care of so many souls redeemed by his blood; to you and to your Immaculate Heart in this tragic hour of human history, we commit, we entrust, we consecrate [**confiamos, entregamos, consagramos**], not only the Holy Church, the mystical body of your Jesus, which suffers and bleeds in so many places and is afflicted in so many ways, but also the entire world torn by violent discord, scorched in a fire of hate, victim of its own iniquities. ... Finally, just as the Church and the entire human race were consecrated to the Heart of your Jesus, because by placing in him every hope, it may be for them a token and pledge of victory and salvation; so, henceforth, may they be perpetually consecrated to you, to your Immaculate Heart [**assim desde hoje Vos sejam perpetuamente consagrados também a Vós e ao vosso Coração Imaculado**], O our Mother and Queen of the world, in order that your love and protection may hasten the triumph of the Kingdom of God.”*⁶⁰²

The fundamental impetus for this first consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which was carried out in conjunction with celebrations in Fatima, came from Bl. Alexandrina da Costa⁶⁰³, whose mission was to implore the

⁶⁰¹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 97-98.

⁶⁰² AAS 34 (1942) 318-19, 324-25; *Our Lady: Papal Teachings* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1961) [= *OL*] 374, 380 [alt.]. Cf. AAS 34 (1942) 313-25 for the text of the radio message and the Act of Consecration in both Portuguese and Italian, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., Pp. 747-748.

⁶⁰³ The consecration of the human race to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, accomplished by Pope Pius XII on October 31, 1942, was the result of the requests, not of Sr. Lucy, but of another Portuguese woman, Alexandra da Costa, known by the name of Alexandrina of Portugal, who was born in Balasar, a village situated between the cities of Porto and Braga, on March 30, 1904, a Good Friday. At the age of 14, in order to defend herself against the perverse intentions of three men who had entered the house where she was in the company of two other girls, she jumped out of a window 12 feet high, and as a result of the fall suffered damage to her spinal column that immobilized her in a painful martyrdom that lasted until her death on October 13, 1955. It was to this victim that our Lord gave the order to obtain from the Pope the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The first request dates from July 31, 1935, and Alexandrina, who was already a voluntary victim of the Eucharist, offered herself as well as “victim for the consecration of the world to our little Mother in Heaven.” Our Lord having urged her to obtain this consecration for more than a year, finally her

consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and not from Sister Lúcia, who had a particular mission calling for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. During his address to the Jesuit Marian Congregations or Sodalities on January 21, 1945, Pius XII made another important pronouncement in relation to the act of consecration to Mary.⁶⁰⁴ He said:

*“Consecration to the Mother of God in the Marian Congregation is total gift of oneself, for life and for eternity; it is not just a mere matter of form nor a gift of mere sentiment, but it is an effective gift, fulfilled in an intensity of Christian and Marian life, in the apostolic life, making the member of the congregation a minister of Mary and, as it were, her hands visible on earth through the spontaneous flow of a superabundant interior life which overflows in all the exterior works of deep devotion, of worship, of charity, of zeal.”*⁶⁰⁵

Pope John XXIII approved the acts of consecration of his predecessors indirectly in his first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram* that he published on June 29, 1959. Few months later he spoke of the good results which are to be sought from the consecration of Italy to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, carried out by the bishops of

spiritual director, Fr. Mariano Pinho, S.J., transmitted this request for the consecration of the world on September 11, 1936, to His Holiness Pope Pius XI by the intermediary of his Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli. The Holy See then ordered the Apostolic Nunciature of Lisbon to initiate an inquiry into the matter. On July 11, 1937, the Provincial of the Jesuits wrote to the Nuncio, relating to him the conclusion of the investigation. (...) It was Fr. Pinho who was charged with preaching the spiritual retreat to the Portuguese bishops at Fatima in June 1938; at the end of the retreat, the bishops wrote a collective letter to Pope Pius XI. (...) A few months after this letter, our Lord sent to Alexandrina the external supernatural sign that was to authenticate in the eyes of the Holy See that the request came from God: the sign consisted of the young woman's participation, physical and spiritual, in the holy passion of our Lord. This phenomenon occurred every Friday from October 3, 1938, and each time became more painful for the young woman: she, who was normally incapable of moving, arose then in ecstasy to relive the passion of Jesus. The phenomenon only ended on March 27, 1942, when, under the pontificate of Pope Pius XII, everything was ready for the greatly desired consecration. On May 22, 1942 Jesus said to Alexandrina: “The heart of the Pope, the heart of gold, is resolved to consecrate the world to the Heart of Mary.” In fact, on October 31, 1942, on the occasion of the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima, Pope Pius XII, speaking in Portuguese over the radio, consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a consecration which he renewed on December 8, 1942, at Rome during the course of a ceremony. Since during the same years Sr. Lucy had been petitioning the Vatican to obtain the consecration of Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart, this consecration of the world was attributed to the requests of the seer of Fatima. Nevertheless the two requests are distinct, as are their origins: the consecration of the world was due to the requests and sufferings of Alexandra da Costa; the request for the consecration of Russia is part of the Message of Fatima which has been transmitted by Sr. Lucy. (See the brochure by Fr. Humberto Maria Pasquale, S.D.B.: *Mensagem de Jesus para a consagração do mundo ao Imaculado Coração de Maria*, published with *imprimatur* in 1980 by *Cavaliere de l'Immaculée*, Porto) (Delestre, Fabrice, *Alexandrina of Portugal and the Consecration*, in:

<http://www.fatima.org/consecrussia/notobeyed2.asp>, 24.06.14.)

⁶⁰⁴ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 748.

⁶⁰⁵ *Discorsi e radiomessaggi di sua Santità Pio XII*, Vol. VI (Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1951) 281 [OL 389], as cited in: *Ibid.*, Pp. 748-749.

Italy earlier that same day, September 13, 1959. This message of the Pope was broadcasted in a radio message to the Italian National Eucharistic Congress.⁶⁰⁶

Pope Paul VI solemnly declared Mary as the Mother of the Church at the end of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, on November 21, 1964. As he wished to commemorate the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Pius XII, he prayed in these words:⁶⁰⁷

*“We commit [committimus] the human race, its difficulties and anxieties, its just aspirations and ardent hopes, to the protection of our heavenly Mother. O Virgin Mother of God, most august Mother of the Church, we commend [commendamus] the whole Church and the Ecumenical Council to you. ... We commend [commendamus] the whole human race to your Immaculate Heart, O Virgin Mother of God.”*⁶⁰⁸

On the fiftieth anniversary of the first apparition of Mary to the children of Fatima on May 13, 1967, Pope Paul VI issued his Apostolic Exhortation *Signum Magnum*, where he made the following appeal towards the end of his exhortation:

*“Since the 25th anniversary is recalled this year of the solemn consecration of the Church and of mankind to Mary, the Mother of God, and to her Immaculate Heart, by our predecessor of venerated memory, Pius XII, on Oct. 31, 1942, on the occasion of the broadcast message to the Portuguese nation - a consecration which we ourselves have renewed on Nov. 21, 1964 - we exhort all the sons of the Church to renew personally their consecration to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of the Church and to bring alive this most noble act of veneration through a life ever more consonant with the divine will and in a spirit of filial service and of devout imitation of their heavenly Queen.”*⁶⁰⁹

Pope Paul VI entrusted the Holy Year to Mary in the apostolic Letter *Apostolorum Limina* of May 23, 1974. He entrusted the reconciliation as the fruit of the Holy Year observance to Mary's intercession in his apostolic exhortation *Paterna*

⁶⁰⁶ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 106.

⁶⁰⁷ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 749.

⁶⁰⁸ AAS 56 (1964) 1017-18 [The Pope Speaks (= TPS) Vol. 10:140-141]. Cf. *Totus Tuus* 106-108, as cited in: Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Paul VI, *Signum Magnum*, No. 8, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19670513_signum-magnum_en.html, 08.07.13.

Cum Benevolentia of December 8, 1974. But the most heartfelt of these acts of *entrustment* came on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1975:⁶¹⁰

“Listen, O Mary, to our filial voice, echoing the sentiments of the whole Church on this tenth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, and at the happy conclusion of this Holy Year, and we earnestly implore your special heavenly assistance in this critical hour for the spiritual and civil destiny of the world.

*To you, spiritual Mother of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, we **entrust** the deliberate Christian commitment which we assumed with holy Baptism, and we confirm it in the spirit of renewal, which has marked the sacred Jubilee that we have just celebrated, and which must mark our witness as living members of the Catholic Church in the years to come.*

*To you, the Mother of the Church, we therefore **entrust** our commitment to reconciliation, which has likewise been strengthened during the Holy Year: reconciliation with God, reconciliation with all men our brethren, the longed-for complete reconciliation with all those who believe in our one Teacher and Redeemer, your Son Jesus Christ, ever increasing reconciliation through justice, liberty, cooperation among the different social groups, and finally reconciliation between the peoples and nations in a watchful and sincere spirit of security, collaboration, and peace.”*⁶¹¹

Cardinal Wojtyla at the end of the retreat, which he preached, to Pope Paul VI and his coworkers in March 1976 made a very remarkable and suitable statement referring to the act of entrustment carried out by Pope Paul VI on December 8, 1975.⁶¹² He said:

“Both Holy Scripture, so rich in metaphor as we have just found, and the experience of the faithful see the Mother of God as the one who in a very special way is united with the Church at the most difficult moments in her history, when the attacks on her become most threatening. And this is in full accord with the vision of the woman revealed in Genesis and Revelation. Precisely in periods when Christ, and therefore his Church, Pope, bishops, priests, religious and all the faithful become the sign which provokes the most implacable and premeditated contradiction, Mary appears particularly close to the Church, because the Church is always in a way her Christ, first the Christ-child and then the crucified and risen Christ.

⁶¹⁰ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 110.

⁶¹¹ The Italian text may be found in *Marianum* 38 (1976); 397-98; the English text is in *ORE* 403:12 and Paul VI, *Mary-God's Mother and Ours* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1979), 218-19, as cited in: *Ibid.*, Pp.110-111.

⁶¹² Cf., *Id.*, P. 111.

*If in such periods, such times in history, there arises a particular need to **entrust oneself to Mary** - as the Holy Father did on 8th December 1975, the 10th anniversary of the end of the Council - that need flows directly from the integral logic of the faith, from rediscovery of the whole divine economy and from understanding of its mysteries.*

*The Father in heaven demonstrated the greatest trust in mankind by giving mankind his Son (cf., Jn 3:16). The human creature to whom he first **entrusted** him was Mary, the woman of the proto-evangelium (cf. Gen. 3:15), then Mary of Nazareth and Bethlehem. And until the end of time she will remain the one to whom God entrusts the whole of his mystery of salvation.”⁶¹³*

The Church’s collective wisdom on Marian Consecration apart from the pontifical acts of consecration can be summarized in two magisterial texts. The first is the short statement, but a very meaningful statement, by Pope Paul VI in his Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity on November 18, 1965: “*All should devoutly venerate her and commend their life and apostolate to her maternal care.*”⁶¹⁴ The second is the following passage from the Marian encyclical of **Blessed Pope John Paul II- Redemptoris Mater** in the year 1987.⁶¹⁵

“Marian spirituality, like its corresponding devotion, finds a very rich source in the historical experience of individuals and of the various Christian communities present among the different peoples and nations of the world. In this regard, I would like to recall, among the many witnesses and teachers of this spirituality, the figure of Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, who proposes consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary, as an effective means for Christians to live faithfully their baptismal commitments. I am pleased to note that in our own time too new manifestations of this spirituality and devotion are not lacking.”⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction* (New York: Crossroad-Seabury, 1979), 205. Perhaps one of the most striking instances of the notion of God’s “entrusting” of Himself to Mary in his papal Magisterium occurs in *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 39: “For it must be recognized that before anyone else it was God himself, the Eternal Father, who entrusted himself to the Virgin of Nazareth, giving her his own Son in the mystery of the Incarnation” [*Etenim oportet agnoscere Deum ipsum, aeternum Patres, imprimis se credidisse Virgini Nazarethanae, dando ei suum Filium in Incarnationis mysterio*] (Inseg X:i [1987], 726; St. Paul ed., 55). In the Latin text the verb *credere* is used in the sense of entrusting or committing something to someone, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 111-112.

⁶¹⁴ Paul VI, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, No. 4, in: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html, 08.07.13.

⁶¹⁵ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 73-74.

⁶¹⁶ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 48, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 08.07.13.

Pope John Paul II promoted Marian consecration and entrustment as no other successor of St. Peter has ever done. We have already discussed at length on the rich theology of consecration/entrustment, which he offered in his Marian encyclical what he calls a “*filial entrustment to the Mother of Christ*”. His first solemn entrustment of the Church to Our Lady took place at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome on December 8, 1978. However the prototype of great acts of consecration/entrustment was that pronounced by previous recording for Pentecost Sunday, June 7, 1981, in conjunction with the celebration of the 1600th anniversary of the First Council of Constantinople and the 1550th anniversary of the Council of Ephesus. The very same act was renewed again on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1981 in front of the icon of the *Salus Populi Romani* in St. Mary Major’s. This became the archetype of two subsequent acts: The first of these was made on May 13, 1982 and the second was intended to be one of the crowning acts of the Holy Year of the Redemption which began on March 25, 1983, and concluded on Easter Day, April 22, 1984. The act itself was carried out by the Pope on March 24, 1984, in St. Peter’s Square before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima which was brought from the *Cova da Iria* in Fatima, Portugal.⁶¹⁷

Pope John Paul II in his address to the Participants of the study week of the pontifical academy of sciences on Friday, 26 September, 1986 insisted on the importance of turning towards the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These are the words he spoke:

“If we turn to Mary’s Immaculate Heart she will surely help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths towards the future”.

Our act of consecration refers ultimately to the heart of her Son, for as the Mother of Christ she is wholly united to his redemptive mission. As at the marriage feast of Cana, when she said “Do whatever he tells you”, Mary directs all things to her Son, who answers our prayers and forgives our sins. Thus by dedicating ourselves to the heart of Mary we discover a sure way to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, symbol of the merciful love of our Saviour.

⁶¹⁷ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 166, ; Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., Pp. 750-752.

The act of entrusting ourselves to the Heart of Our Lady establishes a relationship of love with her in which we dedicate to her all that we have and are. This consecration is practiced essentially by a life of grace, of purity, of prayer, of penance that is joined to the fulfillment of all the duties of a Christian, and of reparation for our sins and the sins of the world."⁶¹⁸

In his apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, which appeared in the year 2002 the Pope links Rosary and Marian consecration in the following manner:⁶¹⁹

*"In this process of being conformed to Christ in the Rosary, we **entrust** ourselves in a special way to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin. She who is both the Mother of Christ and a member of the Church, indeed her "pre-eminent and altogether singular member", is at the same time the "Mother of the Church". As such, she continually brings to birth children for the mystical Body of her Son. She does so through her intercession, imploring upon them the inexhaustible outpouring of the Spirit. Mary is **the perfect icon of the motherhood of the Church**.*

*The Rosary mystically transports us to Mary's side as she is busy watching over the human growth of Christ in the home of Nazareth. This enables her to train us and to mold us with the same care, until Christ is "fully formed" in us (cf. Gal 4:19). This role of Mary, totally grounded in that of Christ and radically subordinated to it, "in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power". This is the luminous principle expressed by the Second Vatican Council which I have so powerfully experienced in my own life and have made the basis of my episcopal motto: **Totus Tuus**. The motto is of course inspired by the teaching of Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, who explained in the following words Mary's role in the process of our configuration to Christ: "**Our entire perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ**. Hence the most perfect of all devotions is undoubtedly that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most perfectly to Jesus Christ. Now, since Mary is of all creatures the one most conformed to Jesus Christ, it follows that among all devotions that which most consecrates and conforms a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to her the more will it be consecrated to Jesus Christ".*"⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁸ John Paul II, *Address to the Participants of the study week of the pontifical academy of sciences*, No. 3, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1986/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19860922_simposio-maria-gesu_en.html, 08.07.13.

⁶¹⁹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 167.

⁶²⁰ John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, No. 15, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae_en.html, 08.07.13.

Pope Benedict XVI followed the footsteps of Pope John Paul II. Like his predecessor he also used the term entrust quite frequently. His homily at the canonization of Frei Antônio de Sant'Ana Galvão at Campo de Marte, São Paulo, Brazil on May 11, 2007 is a good example for it.⁶²¹

“In fact, the saint that we are celebrating gave himself irrevocably to the Mother of Jesus from his youth, desiring to belong to her forever and he chose the Virgin Mary to be the Mother and Protector of his spiritual daughters.

*My dearest friends, what a fine example Frei Galvão has left for us to follow! There is a phrase included in the formula of his consecration which sounds remarkably contemporary to us, who live in an age so full of hedonism: “**Take away my life before I offend your blessed Son, my Lord!**” They are strong words, the words of an impassioned soul, words that should be part of the normal life of every Christian, whether consecrated or not, and they enkindle a desire for fidelity to God in married couples as well as in the unmarried. The world needs transparent lives, clear souls, pure minds that refuse to be perceived as mere objects of pleasure. It is necessary to oppose those elements of the media that ridicule the sanctity of marriage and virginity before marriage.*

*In our day, Our Lady has been given to us as the best defense against the evils that afflict modern life; Marian devotion is the sure guarantee of her maternal protection and safeguard in the hour of temptation. And what an unfailing support is this mysterious presence of the Virgin Most Pure, when we invoke the protection and the help of the **Senhora Aparecida!** Let us place in her most holy hands the lives of priests and consecrated laypersons, seminarians and all who are called to religious life.”⁶²²*

On February 11, 2008, on the occasion of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions of the Immaculate Mary at Lourdes, and the celebration of the International Eucharistic Congress at Quebec in Canada Pope Benedict XVI gave a remarkable speech highlighting the close connection that exists between the Mystery of the Eucharist, the role of Mary in the project of salvation, and the reality of human pain and suffering.⁶²³ Towards the end of his speech he entrusted everyone to Mary with the following words:

⁶²¹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, op. cit., P. 753.

⁶²² *L'Osservatore Romano* [= OR] 24 maggio 2007, pp. VI-VII [ORE 1994:14], as cited in: Ibid., Pp. 753-754.

⁶²³ Cf., Benedict XVI: “*Mary Suffers with Those Who Are in Affliction*”, in: <http://marianapostolate.com/2012/02/18/pope-benedict-xvi-mary-suffers-with-those-who-are-in-affliction/>, 08.07.13.

*“I entrust all to Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, the Immaculate Conception. May she help everyone in testifying that the only valid response to human pain and suffering is Christ, who in resurrecting defeated death and gave us the life that knows no end. With these feelings, from my heart I impart to everyone my special Apostolic Blessing.”*⁶²⁴

On May 12, 2010, Benedict XVI at the conclusion of the celebration of vespers with the religious, seminarians and diocesan priests prayed the Act of Entrustment and Consecration of Priests to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Fatima. The Prayer of Entrustment has been already cited in the second chapter.

In his Apostolic Exhortation on 11 October in the year 2011, the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI concludes his exhortation with the following words: *“Let us entrust this time of grace to the Mother of God, proclaimed “blessed because she believed” (Lk. 1:45).”*⁶²⁵

Thus the voice of the Magisterium unceasingly proclaimed the significance of the Marian Consecration with clear theological inputs and exegesis for the past three centuries not only through teaching but also through living the consecration to Mary. One cannot overlook the fact that their teachings are scripturally rooted and originally expressed.

IV.5. Conclusion

The entire discussion on the significance of the Marian consecration points out to the fact that the act of consecration to Mary is a very complex one with lot of difficulties and it can be neither defined properly nor explained in few sentences. One has to really plunge deep into the ocean of theological truths and the teachings of the Church in order to find the beautiful pearls of Marian consecration. The basic truths of Marian consecration can be summarized in a crystal form in the following manner: Marian consecration which flows from the grace of our baptism is an Act of Entrustment, which enables us to respond to God’s call to holiness, by continuously giving ourselves to God through the hands of Mary. She is not the ultimate finality of any consecration rather she is only an intermediate end of the act of consecration.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20111011_porta-fidei_en.html, 08.07.13.

The ultimate destination of every human being is God, and Jesus is the door (Jn 10:7) through which we go to the Father. Mary is the surest, easiest, shortest and the most perfect means to go to Christ (True Devotion, No. 55). Therefore, by giving oneself totally and unreservedly to her through the act of consecration, we are safely and smoothly led by her to her Son, Jesus Christ in order to be anchored in Him more deeply and intimately so that we may become a perfect disciple of Him like her. This explains the necessity and the significance of consecrating oneself to Mary, which can be substantiated by the words of the great Marian saints, and Marian Popes.

St. Montfort in his true devotion says:

*“Theirs is the example which fully justifies our dependence on her. The Father gave and still gives his Son only through her. He raises children for himself only through her. He dispenses his graces to us only through her. God the Son was prepared for mankind in general by her alone. (...) It is through her alone that the Son distributes his merits and virtues. The Holy Spirit formed Jesus only through her, and he forms the members of the Mystical Body and dispenses his gifts and his favours through her. With such a compelling example of the three divine Persons before us, we would be extremely perverse to ignore her and not consecrate ourselves to her. Indeed we would be blind if we did not see the need for Mary in approaching God and making our total offering to him.”*⁶²⁶

Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical letter *Octobri Mense* explains the necessity to go to Mary with the following words:

*“With equal truth may it be also affirmed that, by the will of God, Mary is the intermediary through whom is distributed unto us this immense treasure of mercies gathered by God, for mercy and truth were created by Jesus Christ. Thus as no man goeth to the Father but by the Son, so no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother.”*⁶²⁷

The Marian Pope Pope John Paul II already when he was a cardinal made a remarkable statement, which has already been cited. At this point to quote that statement once again would not be an exaggeration rather it would be a strong convincing affirmation.

⁶²⁶ *True Devotion to Mary*, 140, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 332-333.

⁶²⁷ Leo XIII, *Octobri Mense*, No. 4, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_22091891_octobri-mense_en.html, 09.07.13.

*“The Father in heaven demonstrated the greatest trust in mankind by giving mankind his Son (cf Jn 3:16). The human creature to whom he first entrusted him was Mary, the woman of the proto-evangelium (cf. Gen. 3:15), then Mary of Nazareth and Bethlehem. And until the end of time she will remain the one to whom God entrusts the whole of his mystery of salvation.”*⁶²⁸

In spite of such clear theological enlightenment, it is very unfortunate that there are difficulties in understanding the significance of consecration of Mary. But just raising the question alone or just pointing out the defects alone without searching for an explanation or an answer would only damage our spiritual heritage, because the fundamental truths of Marian consecration is often unjustly neglected. Having discussed the fundamental notions, the usual objections to Marian consecration along with the basic teachings of the Church, let us now examine the place of her Immaculate Heart and her ‘mediation’ role in our acts of consecration/entrustment to her.

⁶²⁸ Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction* (New York: Crossroad-Seabury, 1979), 205, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 111-112.

V. Consecration to the Immaculate Heart and the Principle of Marian Mediation

Part I: Consecration to the Immaculate Heart

V.1. Introduction

The faithful Disciples of Christ have sung the praises and excellencies of Mary down through the centuries because they have understood that the Almighty has re-created that which He had already created in her, by her and from her. Christ gave her to us as His greatest gift and it is His wish that we honour her and love her just as He loves her. In the veneration of Mary's Immaculate Heart, we can render Our Lady the full honour and love, which our Lord wishes. This devotion to the Immaculate Heart invites the faithful to imitate the virtues of the Blessed Mother, because there is a blending of love and sacrifice, which is the very core of the Christian life. The recognition of the *Immaculate* Heart of Mary as the symbol of her extraordinary sanctity and love is what distinguishes this particular Marian veneration from all other devotions towards her. Throughout the centuries the faithful turned instinctively to Mary in times of tribulations and they have understood that this Immaculate Heart of Mary loves all her children, whether they are good or bad and the Immaculate Heart of Mary goes out to the child which is most in need. The faithful also understood that the love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary desires to draw each one of her Children to her Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore the response of the faithful to the devotion of her Immaculate Heart found its manifestations in the form of observing the Feast of the Immaculate Heart and in the practice of consecrating the World to her Immaculate Heart. However we should not forget the fact that whatever we speak of Immaculate Heart of Mary must always be interpreted in terms of her heart being inseparable from the Heart of her Divine Son, to whom she points and draws us. The devotion to Mary's heart is basically concerned with the love that her heart has for her Son, Jesus. The love of her heart is meant to be a model for the way we should love God. This devotion to her heart is nothing but recognizing not only her extraordinary holiness but also the immense love which she bestowed on Jesus as His mother. It is also a recognition of her call to share and to cooperate in

His redemptive suffering. Thus it is very obvious that the theme “Heart” became an important theme in the great movements of consecration.⁶²⁹

We have already seen in the previous chapter how the theme of “consecration to Mary” was a big problematic theme for discussion and for debate, because Mary was seen as a mere *creature*. The devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary now raises a further problem: How can one consecrate oneself to an internal organ or to a created object?⁶³⁰ Or why should there be an Act of Consecration to the Heart of a creature? Heart is simply an organ, or flesh or just a muscle. How can it be legitimate to consecrate oneself to the Heart of Mary? Is this not idolatry? How can one understand such acts of consecrations to the Immaculate Heart theologically? In order to gain a clear understanding about the excellencies and the significance of her Heart, we need firstly to clarify the meaning, the nature of the symbolism of heart in order to affirm the legitimacy of this devotional practice and then we will explore the history of this devotion, its origin in Scripture and in Tradition and its development in the Veneration in the Church. In this exploration we need to ascertain its objectives and purposes. In the second part we will examine the unique role of Mary in the mystery of Christ and the economy of our salvation, in particular, her role as Mediatrix.

V.2. The meaning of the word “Heart”, its symbolism and its theological difficulties

Our human life depends, in a unique way, on the perfect functioning of our heart. But from our every day experience we know that the thoughts of our mind, the acts of our will, and the movements of our emotional nature influence our heart. And hence the beating of our heart is slower or faster, stronger or weaker, depending upon the impression of our senses and depending upon how our mind, our will and our feelings react to these impressions.⁶³¹

“The heart is considered as being most intimately related to all the dispositions and movements both good and bad of our soul. Thus

⁶²⁹ Cf., Murphy, John, F., *Mary’s Immaculate Heart: The Meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, The Bruce publishing company, 1951, Pp. v-x, ; Cf., Fox, Robert, J., *Immaculate Heart of Mary: True Devotion*, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1986, P. 23, ; Cf., Donal, A. Foley, *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World*, op. cit., Pp. 71-72.

⁶³⁰ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 169.

⁶³¹ Cf., Leen, Edward/Kearney, John, *Our Blessed Mother: Talks on our Lady*, Clonmore & Reynolds Ltd., 1947, P. 109.

*the word “heart” is used not merely in reference to the various acts but also in reference to the various states of the human spirit. Finally, in ordinary language the word “heart” has come to be used as if it were the very seat of the movements, acts and dispositions of our soul.”*⁶³²

Thus we can conclude that the word “heart” in normal usage means the soul with its dispositions, good and bad, its virtues and its vices. This doesn’t mean that the word “heart” is used just only symbolically. The heart responds to the interior dispositions and acts of the soul, it beats in sympathy with them and it participates in them. Thus the word “heart” stands for the person with all his characteristic features, for all the virtues and vices and for the interior life of the soul of that person.⁶³³

The Catholic Encyclopedia explains the meaning and the use of the word “heart” in the following way:

*“The word heart awakens, first of all, the idea of a material heart, of the vital organ that throbs within our bosom, and which we vaguely realize as intimately connected not only with our own physical, but with our emotional and moral, life. Now this heart of flesh is currently accepted as the emblem of the emotion and moral life with which we associate it, and hence the place assigned to the word heart in symbolic language, as also the use of the same word to designate those things symbolized by the heart. Note, for instance, the expressions “to open one’s heart”, “to give one’s heart”, etc. It may happen that the symbol becomes divested of its material meaning that the sign is overlooked in beholding only the thing signified. Thus, in current language, the word soul no longer suggests the thought of breath, and the word heart brings to mind only the idea of courage and love. But this is perhaps a figure of speech or a metaphor, rather than a symbol.”*⁶³⁴

This figure of speech in its theological application is known as *synecdoche*. Thus we see that the heart refers not only to the internal organ in human beings but it is also considered equivalent to the person. The heart as a natural symbol evokes many levels of meanings. Pope John Paul II in his homily given on June 28, 1984, at the Gemelli Polyclinic and Faculty of Medicine in Rome brings out the richness of the “*anthropological resonance*” which the word ‘heart’ awakens.⁶³⁵ He says:

“This word [heart] evokes not only sentiments proper to the affective sphere, but also all those memories, thoughts, reasonings,

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 109-110.

⁶³⁴ Bainvel, Jean, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, in:

http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/h/heart_of_jesus/devotion_to_sacred.html, 18.07.13.

⁶³⁵ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 76.

plans, that make up man's innermost world. The heart in biblical culture, and also in a large part of other cultures, is that essential center of the personality in which man stands before God as the totality of body and soul, as I who am thinking, willing and loving, as the center in which the memory of the past opens up to the planning of the future.

Certainly, the human heart that interests the anatomist, the physiologist, the cardiologist, the surgeon, etc., and their scientific contribution - I am happy to acknowledge in such a place as this takes on great importance for the serene and harmonious development of man in the course of his earthly existence. But the significance, according to which we now refer to the heart, transcends these partial considerations to reach the sanctuary of personal self-awareness in which is summarized and, so to speak, condensed the concrete essence of man, the center in which the individual decides on himself in the face of others, the world, and God himself.

*Only of man can it be properly said that **he has a heart**. It cannot be said, obviously, of a pure Spirit, not even of an animal. The **redire ad cor** ("returning to the heart") from the scattering of multiple external experiences is a possibility reserved uniquely to man."*⁶³⁶

From the above passage it is very clear that the word "heart" stands for the whole person and it stands basically for the "essential centre of the personality".⁶³⁷

Unfortunately this rich meaning of the word heart was marginalized by Western culture. The Western culture, including Greek culture as well as Latin, has been consistently resistant to the heart. D. Fernandez, a patristic Scholar, has observed that there is a great contrast between the frequency of the use of the word "heart" in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. According to him the word "heart" appears in the Old Testament 853 times and in the New Testament it appears 159 times. He also observed that even in the writings of the Fathers of the Church of the third through sixth centuries the word "heart" appears very rarely. The New Testament is three times shorter than the Old Testament, yet the word heart appears five times less frequently. This points out to the fact that there was a kind of resistance in the Greek language to the usage of the word "heart".⁶³⁸

⁶³⁶ *Inseg* VII: 1 (1984), 1974-75; *ORE* 843:9, as cited in: *Ibid.*, Pp. 76-77.

⁶³⁷ Cf., Leen, Edward/Kearney, John, *Our Blessed Mother*, op. cit., P. 250.

⁶³⁸ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 170.

Laurentin explains with clear examples the reason why the Greek language resisted using the word “heart” and in what sense the word “heart” was used in the Septuagint translation of the Old and New Testament. He says:

*“The tendency is evident even in the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, which was made two centuries before Christ. In this text, the Hebrew word **heart** (**leb** or **lebav**) is often rendered “Spirit” (Greek **nous**): Exodus 7:23; Joshua 14:7; Job 7:17; Isaiah 10:7; 10:12; 40:13; and 41:22; or, on other occasions, it is rendered “life” or “mind” (Greek **psyche**): 2 Kings 6:11; 1 Chronicles 12:38; 15:29; 12:2; 22:7, 2 Chronicles 7:11; 9:1; 15:15; 31:21; Psalms 21:2; 37:15; 8:20, 32; and Proverbs 6:21; 16:3. The same phenomenon is to be observed in the New Testament, where Semitic words had at one time to be translated into the Greek Koine, or the popular spoken Greek. In those days, this Greek Koine was a kind of international language similar to American English today. The original Semitic word could well have been “heart” in Luke 2:35, which reads “and a sword will pierce through your own **soul** also”. Or again, in John 19:34, which reads “but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water”, the original could well have read “heart” instead of “side”, since blood indisputably does come from the heart. The very same phenomenon could be operative in the case of Luke 24:45: “Then he opened their **minds** to understand the Scriptures.” “Minds” in conjunction with “understand” is somewhat redundant. In fact, Jesus really did open their hearts to understand, for what he was revealing to them on that occasion was an understanding of the heart.”⁶³⁹*

Greek philosophy gives more importance to the mind than to the heart. It gives more importance to rationality than to love, and to truth than to the gift of self. But the heart is considered as one of the preferred dwelling places of revelation. This is the reason why the Biblical revelation invites us to understand the primacy of the heart over rationality and the primacy of love over the will to knowledge and power. Unfortunately the Greek philosophy defines human being as “a rational animal” which obviously tells us that the essence of human being is placed in the head rather than in the heart. This rational background of Greek culture explains the reason for the rarity of the word heart in the theology and tradition of the Western Church. Thus we understand why there is almost a total disappearance of the word heart in the writings of the Greek Fathers from the third to the sixth century. Similarly, the Latin language also did not favor an extensive use of the word heart. The mystical experience made by St. Augustine led him to react against this “underdevelopment”

⁶³⁹ Ibid., Pp. 170-171.

of the concept of the heart. Other mystical writers like St. Gertrude (1256-1302) and Mechtilde of Magdeburg also reacted in the same manner. The Scholastic philosophy placed great value on abstractions and less value on symbols and therefore it deemphasized this kind of “heart” approach. To restore the heart to a place in the foreground of the Church’s life, private revelations were required. This gave birth to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Holy See resisted for a very long time to introduce the Feast of Sacred Heart of Jesus because of various theological questions, which remained unanswered. Some of the questions were: Is it possible to dedicate a devotion to an internal body organ? How can an internal organ, the Heart, be considered as the very person of Christ? Whether the object of the devotion was the Heart of flesh as a symbol of the love of Jesus, or whether was it the love of Jesus symbolized by his Heart? For a long time in the Church among the rationalistic-minded theologians “The Heart of Jesus” did not make any sense.⁶⁴⁰

It was the encyclical letter *Haurietis Aquas* of Pope Pius XII, which gave a clear teaching about the symbolism of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He says:

“...the Heart of the Incarnate Word is deservedly and rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that threefold love with which the divine Redeemer unceasingly loves His eternal Father and all mankind.

It is a symbol of that divine love which He shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit but which He, the Word made flesh, alone manifests through a weak and perishable body, since “in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

It is, besides, the symbol of that burning love which, infused into His soul, enriches the human will of Christ and enlightens and governs its acts by the most perfect knowledge derived both from the beatific vision and that which is directly infused.

And finally - and this in a more natural and direct way - it is the symbol also of sensible love, since the body of Jesus Christ, formed by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, possesses full powers of feelings and perception, in fact, more so than any other human body.

Since, therefore, Sacred Scripture and the official teaching of the Catholic faith instruct us that...we can contemplate and honor the Heart of the divine Redeemer as a symbolic image of His love and a witness of our redemption and, at the same time, as a sort of

⁶⁴⁰ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 171-173.

*mystical ladder by which we mount to the embrace of "God our Savior."*⁶⁴¹

This symbolism of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is explained in the above text, cannot be applied to the Heart of Mary in the same way. This is because the Heart of Jesus is a human symbol of a Divine Person. It is the Heart of God in person born humanly from Mary, whereas the Heart of Mary is the symbol of a human creature.⁶⁴² Therefore if we want to understand the deeper meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we should first try to have a deeper understanding of the Holy Heart of Mary.

V.3. The Holy Heart of Mary

We have already seen that the word "heart" is used to mean the soul of a human person with its acts and dispositions. Perhaps we may raise the question here: how can we penetrate into the secrets of her holy heart and know her interior life, her hidden dispositions and the intimate secrets of her beautiful soul? By reflecting on her organism we can draw certain conclusions about her admirable soul. Unquestionably she had a perfect human nature, the creature that was most perfect ever created, except the human nature of her Divine Son. Her body was perfect in every way and there was a perfect balance and delicacy in all her physical powers. It was from this body that the Holy Spirit formed the sacred body of Jesus. We all know by experience that the heart of a human being does not respond perfectly to the movements of the soul. Thus we may be real lovers of God and yet our physical heart may not respond; we feel sometimes emptiness, as we say we are not directly conscious of our love. But in the case of Mary it was not so. The heart of Mary drove the streams of her blood to every part of her immaculate body and reacted with unimaginable delicacy to every movement of her most holy soul. Her holy heart responded perfectly to every act and disposition of her soul. She felt her love for her Son, and she felt her love for the human beings. And hence she could respond to the wish of God with her fiat. This physical perfection of her organism was the result of the divine providence. God Himself while creating Mary in a most special way watched over all the series of Mary's ancestry: He preserved the good and eliminated

⁶⁴¹ Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, Nos, 54-58, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_15051956_haurietis-aquas_en.html, 18.07.13.

⁶⁴² Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 79, ; Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 175.

the defects. Thus the body of Mary, by these very laws, which God directed, possessed a perfection of temperament and character that made it fit to receive the most beautiful soul that God had ever created. These fundamental truths give us a fuller understanding of the Heart of Mary, that means, the Heart of Mary, which was so perfectly prepared to respond in sympathy with the least movement of her soul, was of unimaginable natural beauty, of indescribably perfect dispositions, and was lifted by grace above the natural plane to a perfection that God alone can comprehend.⁶⁴³

Leo Scheffczyk explains more in depth the symbol of heart of Mary and where this reality leads us to. According to him:

*"It is another expression for the person of Mary, seen, in its innermost depth and in its unifying centre. The heart of Mary symbolizes therefore first of all that Jesus' Mother conceived her Son in perfect love and devotion, as it is shown in her unconditional "Fiat" (Lk 1,38). The Church Fathers highlighted this fact by saying: Mary conceived Christ first in her heart and then in her body. This is to indicate the depth, the wholeness, the radicalism and intimacy of the connection between the Mother and the Son, which proved itself not only on the occasion of giving birth, but persevered all the way up to her standing beneath the cross (Cf. Jn 19,25). Thus "heart" symbolizes also Mary's sacrifice that she offered to Christ throughout her life and which was joined to Christ's sacrifice. The depth and intensity of the union of Mary with Christ and his work "in the heart" of the Mother of God may explain a thought, which is not easy to understand that Mary is affected personally by the taunts and insults against her Son."*⁶⁴⁴

Leo Scheffczyk, while explaining the symbolism of the heart of Mary, brings into the connection between the heart of Mary and its unique feature of the 'Immaculate' in the following manner:

"Simeons's prophecy about the sword piercing Mary's heart (Lk. 2,34f), which is fulfilled underneath the cross, states that the unity of the Mother with her Son was not only one of deepest love, but showed itself and stood its test in suffering. In view of the loving and suffering heart of Mary it is understandable what Pius XII said about the contribution of Mary to the work of our salvation: "Since the Blessed Virgin was so inseparably united with Christ ... salvation came to us from the intimate union of Christ's love and suffering with the love and pain also of the Mother." But Fatima as

⁶⁴³ Cf., Leen, Edward/Kearney, John, op. cit., Pp. 112-113.

⁶⁴⁴ Scheffczyk, Leo, op. cit., P. 340, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

*well as the liturgy preceding it and also the subsequent liturgy express pointedly the connection of the heart of Mary with the feature of the "Immaculate". For this reason the veneration is towards the "Immaculate Heart of Mary". The quality of "Immaculate" gives to the symbol of the heart once again a new meaning, which is more related to the virginity of Mary than to her motherhood. This quality points out towards Mary's virginity, towards her sinlessness and profound integrity with regards of her sentiments. The tradition of the Fathers has equated her virginity with the purity and integrity of true faith. In this way Mary, the immaculate virgin, was above all the archetype and model of an unclouded, clear faith, which was not narrowed by any aberration. And when the Church is called virgin or bride, it is then because of the true faith, which was kept in purity and integrity. This faith does not only mean the steadfast holding on to truth, but also the attitude of obedience, loyalty and trust associated with it. While the loving heart as such tells us about the depth, the totality and the radicalism of the bond between Christ and his Mother in being and action, the 'Immaculate' points towards the innermost integrity, the gracious purity and the unaffected and innocent faith of this bond. Both elements belong together like the origin and its development, like the source of light and the beam of light."*⁶⁴⁵

From the above explanation about the heart of Mary we can say that in the act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the devotion is not simply addressed to her material heart but to the Mother of God, as a person. The soul and the heart each stand for the whole person and in this sense the devotion to the Heart of Mary has to be understood. Although the heart of Mary had been represented and written about in earlier times, it had not been an object of devotion. In the tradition of the Church, there have been many acts of consecration from the seventeenth century onwards and partly it is modeled upon the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which was at that time well established. Jean Eudes's teaching in his book on the *"The Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Devotion to Jesus and Mary together and in particular to their hearts"* and his great work *"The Admirable Heart of Mary"* contributed a lot to the birth and growth of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁶⁴⁶ Though the devotion to the Heart of Mary and the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus are inseparable because of their common roots, the devotion to the Heart of Mary was not promoted along with the promotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It developed along another path. This path would be normative in Fatima, after

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., Pp. 340-341, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁶⁴⁶ Cf., Boss, Sarah Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, op. cit., P. 417.

the Second World War.⁶⁴⁷ Now let us take a look at the nature and history of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

V.4. The Nature of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

The devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary is a special form of devotion to Mary (*hyperdulia*) and it is different from the kind of veneration paid to the Heart of Jesus because devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is only a form of devotion to the adorable Person of Jesus (*latria*). In the devotion to the Heart of Mary, the attention and the homage of the faithful, is contained in reading therein all that the human heart of Mary suggests, namely.⁶⁴⁸

*“Mary’s interior life, her joys and sorrows, her virtues and hidden perfections, and, above all, her virginal love for her God, her maternal love for her Divine Son, and her motherly and compassionate love for her sinful and miserable children here below.”*⁶⁴⁹

Just a devotion directed to her physical heart alone is insufficient. That what constitutes our devotion towards her is our consideration of Mary’s interior life, the beauties of her soul, together with the physical Heart of Mary merely as a part of her virginal body. These two elements are very essential elements to the devotion.⁶⁵⁰

The nature of our veneration of the Heart of Mary is analogous to our worship of the Heart of Jesus. It is, however, necessary to indicate a few differences in this analogy. Devotion to the Heart of Jesus is fundamentally directed to the Divine Heart as overflowing with love for human beings, whereas in the devotion to the heart of Mary, one is attracted to the love of this Heart for Jesus and for God but at the same time its love for human beings is not overlooked. The first act of the devotion to the Heart of Jesus is the love eager to respond to love, in devotion to the Heart of Mary there is no first act so clearly indicated. In this devotion the faithful are invited to study the Heart of Mary and to imitate it. This study and imitation hold as important a place as love. In the devotion to the heart of Mary though the heart has

⁶⁴⁷ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 59-60.

⁶⁴⁸ Cf., Bainvel, Jean, *Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, in:

http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/h/heart_of_mary/devotion_to_immaculate.html, 19.07.13.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁰ Cf., Ibid.

an essential part as symbol and sensible object, it does not stand out as prominently as in the devotion to the Heart of Jesus because the heart in the devotion to the heart of Mary stands as a symbol of love, virtues, and sentiments, of Mary's interior life.⁶⁵¹

V.5. The History of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

The devotion to the Heart of Mary has its own history, although it is closely related to that of the Heart of Jesus. The early Christians were attracted by the love and virtues of the Heart of Mary. Their first excitement was compassion for the Virgin Mother. It was at the foot of the Cross that the Christian heart first made the acquaintance of the Heart of Mary. Mary was not merely passive at the foot of the Cross; *“she cooperated through charity in the work of our redemption”*, as St. Augustine says. The Sacred Scriptures invited the attention of the early Christians and hence we can say that this devotion had its origin in the Sacred Scriptures. Simeon's prophecy pictured the Heart of Mary pierced by sorrow (Luke, 2:34, 35). But what gave a true scriptural foundation for this devotion to St. John Eudes were the two explicit references of St. Luke, namely, *“Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart.”* (Lk 2: 19) and *“His mother meanwhile kept all these things in her heart.”* (Lk 2:51). These two references clearly manifested that Mary kept all the sayings and doings of Jesus in her heart, that there she might ponder over them and live by them. In these references there is a certain kind of experiential knowledge, more than the love, which in later times will be attributed to the heart. Fr. Benoit interprets the Simeon's prophecy on the sword as Mary bearing the drama of her people, *“in her living person, in her heart of flesh.”*⁶⁵²

In the early centuries of the Church we have no indication of any notable devotion to the Immaculate Heart. But many texts have been found in the patristic and in the medieval writings, where the word “heart” was used to designate Mary's spirit, the centre of her personality, from which response to the divine things came, where the Holy Spirit works, wherein she cooperated in salvation, wherein the

⁶⁵¹ Cf., Ibid.

⁶⁵² Cf., Ibid. ; Cf., *We consecrate ourselves to you forever O Hearts of Jesus and Mary*, version: 6th May, 2003, in: <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/united-hearts/booklet-1.htm>, 19.07.13. ; Cf., O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., Pp. 166-167. ; Cf., Murphy, John, F., *The Immaculate Heart*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., P. 169.

treasures of grace for men lie.⁶⁵³ Richard of St. Lauret writes: “*From the heart of the Virgin went forth faith and consent, the two things by which the salvation of the world was begun.*”⁶⁵⁴ Godfrey of Admont says:

“*The Holy Spirit has placed and gathered in the Heart, without stain, of the Virgin Mary, all the elements of healing grace, that is, all the gifts of compassion and reconciliation. Thus as there are in the human race illnesses of great variety, springing from weaknesses, this Heart contains also numerous and varied remedies to bring health and healing to the souls that are sick.*”⁶⁵⁵

In the East Arnold of Bonneval related the compassion of Christ’s sacrifice in the following manner: “*Christ and his Mother had both but one will, and offered but one holocaust to God; she by the blood of her heart, he by the blood of his body.*”⁶⁵⁶

Ekbart of Schönau composed the first known Prayer to the Heart of Mary in the year 1184. St. Mechtild of Hackeborn (1240-1298) and St. Gertrude the Great (1256-1302) influenced the spirituality of their Cistercian monastery at Helfta to a great extent.⁶⁵⁷

There is evidence of specific references and devotional practices to Mary’s Immaculate Heart from the sixteenth century onwards. Julius II (+1513), the great Renaissance Pope, promulgated certain invocations to the Immaculate Heart to be recited at the sound of the Angelus. St. Francis de Sales (+ 1622) formulated something of a synthesis of what had developed up to his day. He spoke of the perfections of the Heart of Mary, the model of love for God, and dedicated to her most chaste Heart his *Theotimus*. The devotion to the Heart of Mary remained private in nature prior to St. John Eudes. With St. John Eudes (1601-1680) the devotion to Mary’s Heart was made public and received ecclesiastical approval. In the course of the process of the beatification and canonization of St. John Eudes the Church acknowledged him as the Father, Doctor, and Apostle of this devotion. St. John’s efforts contributed to the emergence of liturgical veneration of the most pure heart of Mary. St. John had a feast established for his own Congregations and in certain French dioceses with Episcopal approval. In 1641 he composed its special Office and Mass. He established a feast of the Heart of Mary. The first public feast in

⁶⁵³ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 167.

⁶⁵⁴ *De Laudibus S. M.*, (Inter op. Alberti Magni, ed. Borgnet, 36), 2, 2, 2, p. 82, in: Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ *Hom. In Assumpt.*, 7, in PL 174, 986, in: Id.

⁶⁵⁶ *De laud, B.M.V.*, in PL 189, 1727, in: O’Carroll, Michael, Loc. cit.

⁶⁵⁷ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, Loc. cit.

honor of the Heart of Mary was celebrated at Autun on February 8, 1648 with Episcopal approval. The Holy See refused approbation of this Office and Mass in 1669. By 1672 the feast was celebrated more or less throughout all France. In the year of his death 1680 he completed his famous work, *Le Coeur Admirable*, (*The Admirable Heart of Mary*) consisting of 12 books, the first complete work to be published on the subject.⁶⁵⁸ In his work St. John Eudes portrays Mary's heart under three headings: her "*corporeal heart*", her "*spiritual heart*" and her "*divine heart*". He says:

*"The corporeal heart is not only the principle of her own earthly life, but also produced the blood of which Christ's body was formed. It is the source of the material life of Christ in the womb. The spiritual heart is the noblest portion of the soul; it is made in the image of God, and by grace is able to participate in the divine nature. In Mary that image is untarnished, and the participation, or divinization, is as full as possible. And finally, the divine heart is that aspect of Mary which is concerned directly with her divine motherhood - with the fact that she is the Mother of God. Christ, says Eudes, is the heart of God the Father, and he is also the Heart of his earthly mother. That is to say, the Word of God is not only the Son of both God the Father and the human Mary, but is also the Heart of both. He lives in every part of her, both physical and spiritual. The divine Heart therefore ties Mary immediately to the life of the Blessed Trinity."*⁶⁵⁹

He further explains the purpose of the devotion to the Admirable Heart in following manner:

*"I would have you realize, dear Reader, that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Heart of the Eternal Father, willed to become the Heart or life-principle of His Most Blessed Mother, and He likewise wills to become the Heart of your own life."*⁶⁶⁰

The classical exposition of devotion to the Heart of Mary by St. Jean Eudes can be seen in the following two passages:

"Although at times "heart" stands for the whole interior life of a person, it especially signifies love. Therefore when we honour the

⁶⁵⁸ Cf., Murphy, John, F., *The Immaculate Heart*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., Pp. 169-170.

⁶⁵⁹ Boss, Sarah Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, op. cit., Pp. 417-418.

⁶⁶⁰ Eudes, St John (1948) *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, trans. Charles di Targiani and Ruth Hauser, New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 27. "The Admirable Heart of Mary is the perfect image of the most divine Heart of Jesus. It is the pattern and model for our own hearts; and all our happiness, perfection and glory consists in striving to transform them into so many living images of the sacred Heart of Mary, just as her holy Heart is a consummate likeness of the adorable Heart of Jesus": 265, as cited in: *Ibid.*, P. 419.

Heart of Mary, we have in mind not merely a given mystery, action or quality, nor even the most worthy person of the Virgin, but the source and origin of the value of the holiness of these things, namely, her love and charity."⁶⁶¹

"This admirable Heart is the exemplar and model of our hearts and perfection consists in our hearts becoming living Images of the Heart of Mary... And just as she has borne, and will continue to bear, her Son Jesus in her Heart, she also bore and will always bear in her Heart the members of Jesus as children of hers that she loves, and continually offers to God as fruit of her maternal Heart."⁶⁶²

Rene Laurentin remarks that the vision of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque represented a perfect Illustration of the Intuition of St. John Eudes. He says that St. Margaret Mary Alacoque was acquainted with the regional feast, which was celebrated at Autun on February 8, 1648. This feast had been established one year after her birth. At the Visitation Convent at Paray-le-Monial this particular feast was also celebrated. It was here that she made her religious profession on November 6, 1672.⁶⁶³ For this reason Laurentin affirms that:

"It is not a surprise that she associated the Heart of Jesus with the Heart of Mary. In fact, it was during the octave of the latter feast that she had her vision of the three hearts, one small, the other two large and bursting with light; however, one surpassed the others incomparably. Yet, these three hearts, the Heart of Christ, the Heart of Mary, and the heart of the believer, were one and the same Heart."⁶⁶⁴

Pierre-Joseph Picot de Clorivière (1735–1820), the French Jesuit Marian mystic says that the Heart of Jesus is to be fully found in the Heart of Mary. In his collection of statements about the Heart of Mary he brings out this idea very clearly, where he says:

"These two Hearts subsist essentially one in the other. The Heart of Jesus is found entirely in that of Mary, the Heart of Mary is more in the Heart of Jesus than in itself. The Mother's Heart is the most complete image of the Heart of her Son; it has by gift what his

⁶⁶¹ *La dévotion au très saint Cœur et au très saint nom de la bienheureuse Marie*. Oeuvres complètes 12 vols. (Paris, 1905-1909) 8:431, as cited in: O' Donnell, Máire/O' Donnell, Christopher, *The Sacred Heart of Mary: History and Theology*, Sources of Life, 2007, P. 43.

⁶⁶² *Le cœur admirable de la très sacrée Mère de Dieu*, Ibid. 6:148 - Eudes Admirable 9:1, p. 265 (in part), cf. 8:4, p. 227, as cited in: O' Donnell, Máire/O' Donnell, Christopher, Loc. cit.

⁶⁶³ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 60.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

*Heart possesses as of itself; her Heart carries all his traits....*⁶⁶⁵

De Clorivière in his memorandum to the Holy See and to bishops insists that the Daughters of the Heart of Mary will never separate the love of Mary from that of Jesus. In his letter to the Institute he urges them:

*“These Hearts will be your treasure: a treasure always open for you; a treasure where you will find all things-all the virtues that you will need, all the gifts that you could desire, the remedy of all your ills, superabundant satisfaction to pay all the debts that you might owe to divine Justice. It will be an inexhaustible treasure: the more you will draw spiritual riches from it, the more you will be able to draw new and more precious ones as much for yourselves as for others.”*⁶⁶⁶

The first one to draft an act of consecration to the Heart of Mary was Henri-Marie Boudon of Evreux in the year 1651. The prayer of act of consecration is as follows:⁶⁶⁷

*“Adorable Jesus, in honor of the indescribable love that you have for your Holy Mother, I consecrate myself entirely to your Immaculate Heart [with] an irrevocable resolution always to depend on this lovable Heart, which is one with your own Heart in the capacity of a perpetual slave.”*⁶⁶⁸

Father Joseph- François de Gallifet certainly understood that the two Hearts - the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary - were united and hence he requested the approval of the Holy See for both feasts. In 1729 his project was defeated through the rejection of Rome and in 1765 the two causes were separated, to assure the success of the principal one. From that time on, the two Hearts were separated and disassociated in their liturgical careers and expression. In the mid-eighteenth century, Pope Benedict XIV authorized the Feast of the Heart of Mary for a confraternity established in the Church of the Holy Saviour in Onda. A proper

⁶⁶⁵ “Voilà votre Mère.” *Extraits des oeuvres du P. de Clorivière* (Privately published Paris: Filles du Coeur de Marie, 1935). 215- Ces deux Coeurs sont essentiellement l’un dans l’autre. Le Coeur de Jésus se trouve tout entier dans celui de Marie, le Coeur de Marie est plus dans le Coeur de Jésus qu’il n’est en lui-même. Le Coeur de la Mère est l’image la plus accomplie du Coeur de son Fils; il possède par don ce que celui-ci a par lui-même; il en porte les traits..., cited in: O’ Donnell, Mâire/O’ Donnell, Christopher, Loc. cit., P. 52.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 218 Les Filles du Coeur de Marie ne sépareront jamais l’amour de Marie de celui de Jésus. Ces Coeurs seront votre trésor; trésor toujours ouvert pour vous; trésor où vous trouverez toutes choses, toutes les vertus dont vous aurez besoin, tous les dons que vous pourrez désirer, la remède à tous vos maux, des satisfactions surabondantes pour payer toutes les dettes dont vous seriez redevables à la Justice divine; trésor inépuisable: plus vous en tirerez de richesses spirituelles; plus vous pourrez en puiser de nouvelles et de plus précieuses, tant pour vous-mêmes que pour les autres, as cited in: O’ Donnell, Mâire/O’ Donnell, Christopher, Loc. cit., P. 53.

⁶⁶⁷ Cf., Foot note, No. 2, in: Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 60.

⁶⁶⁸ H.-M. Boudon, *Oeuvres Complètes* [Editions Paris, Migne], 3, P. 1392, as cited in: *Ibid.*

office for the feast of the Heart of Mary received papal approval for the first time by Pope Clemens XIV (+ 1774) in the year 1773. Shortly thereafter, in 1787, the feast received further papal endorsement from Pope Pius VI (+ 1799). Pope Pius VII (+1823) on August 31, 1805 gave the faculty for the celebration of the Feast of the most pure heart of Mary on the Sunday after the Octave of the Assumption to all dioceses and religious Institutes, which asked for it. The Mass of Our Lady of the Snows (August 5) was to be used for that purpose. The two factors which made the devotion to the Heart of Mary to gain momentum were: first of all the revelation of the “miraculous medal” in 1830 and all the prodigies that followed, and then the establishment in 1832, at Notre-Dame-des-Victoires of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Refuge of Sinners by Father Dufriche-Desgenettes, which spread rapidly throughout the world and was the source of numberless graces. On July 21, 1855 under Pope Pius IX (+ 1878), a complete proper Office and Mass for this feast was approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites.⁶⁶⁹

“Now there are at least three feasts of the Heart of Mary, all with different Offices:

that of Rome, observed in many places on the Sunday after the Octave of the Assumption and in others on the third Sunday after Pentecost or in the beginning of July;

that of Père Eudes celebrated among the Eudists and in a number of communities on 8 February; and

*that of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, solemnized a little before Lent.”*⁶⁷⁰

The term ‘Sacred Heart of Mary’ was commonly used during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the term ‘immaculate’ was used exclusively in the cult of Mary’s heart. It is due to the influence of a number of various factors. One factor, for example, may have been the development of the cult of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This was a devotion which focused upon Mary in relation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and it is easy to see that a confusion could have arisen between the Sacred Heart of Mary and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In order to avoid this confusion the use of the term

⁶⁶⁹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., P. 61, ; Cf., Murphy, John, F., *The Immaculate Heart*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., P. 170, ; Cf., Bainvel, Jean, *Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, in: http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/h/heart_of_mary/devotion_to_immaculate.html, 19.07.13.

⁶⁷⁰ Bainvel, Jean, Loc. cit.

‘immaculate’ was practiced. This term was rarely applied to the Heart of Jesus. The most influential factor for the usage of this term was certainly the campaign for a papal definition of the dogma of the ‘immaculate’ conception and the declaration of that dogma in the year 1854.⁶⁷¹

The fullness of the role assigned to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by God was revealed during the twentieth century because of the apparitions of our Lady at Fatima. In 1942 the devotion received a great Impetus through the action of the Holy Father, Pius XII, when he in St. Peter’s Basilica on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception solemnly consecrated the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1944, he extended the Feast to the whole world, to be celebrated with a special Office and Mass on the twenty-second day of August, the octave-day of the Assumption to commemorate this special solemn consecration. In the postconciliar liturgical reforms in 1969 both the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary lost their octaves, however this reform gave the memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary a more suitable place on the day following the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That is the Saturday after the second Sunday after Pentecost. Thus the feasts of the two hearts were finally brought together after a long time.⁶⁷²

V.6. The Meaning of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Christological Foundation of Marian Consecration)

The devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary can be understood only within the framework of Mary’s Heart in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus because the Excellency and the Holiness of the Immaculate Heart of Mary originate from its most perfect union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. By Her destiny as Mother of God, Mary has been called to a union with Him far above and beyond any other creature. Her heart echoes all the feelings, desires, sentiments, longings, affections, motivations, and dispositions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Therefore her heart is capable of purely loving God more than any other creature in heaven or on earth. Her heart is a brilliant mirror reflecting the sanctity of His Heart. His perfections are reproduced in Her

⁶⁷¹ Cf., Boss, Sarah Jane, *Marian Consecration in the contemporary Church*, op. cit., Pp. 419-420.

⁶⁷² Cf., Murphy, John, F., Loc. cit., Pp.170-171, ; Cf., Laurentin, René, Loc. cit., P. 62.

Immaculate Heart, although in a finite way, in virtue of her communion with His Heart.⁶⁷³ St. John Eudes explains this union of Hearts in the following manner:

*“... God has united these two Hearts so closely that they are always one single Heart in feeling, affection and will. Moreover, Jesus lives and reigns so completely in the Heart of Mary that He is truly the soul of her soul, the spirit of her spirit, and the heart of her heart.”*⁶⁷⁴

Another important fact is that Jesus Himself has requested that the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary be placed alongside the devotion to His Sacred Heart. The following sayings indicate the ‘oneness’ of their Hearts.

*“Tell everybody that the Heart of Jesus wants the Immaculate Heart to be venerated at His side.”*⁶⁷⁵

*“Because I want my whole Church to acknowledge that consecration as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that it may extend its devotion later on, and put the devotion to this Immaculate Heart beside devotion to my Sacred Heart.”*⁶⁷⁶

The first human heart, which responded fully to the call of God, was Mary’s, through her *fiat* at Nazareth. By virtue of her Immaculate Conception Mary’s Heart is from the first moment of her existence totally open to the call of God, and from the moment of her *fiat* she is in communion with the “forming” of the human Heart of Jesus and all that it represented. Her Heart is the first to enter into the dialogue of salvation. Pope John Paul II in a letter addressed to Cardinal Sin gives a clear explanation about the “*alliance*” of these two Hearts, to which we are all called.⁶⁷⁷ He says:

“We can say that just as the mystery of Redemption began in the womb of the Virgin of Nazareth, so did that splendid union of the hearts of Christ and his Mother. From the very moment when the Word was made flesh beneath the heart of Mary, there has existed, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, an enduring relationship of

⁶⁷³ Cf., *We consecrate ourselves to you forever O Hearts of Jesus and Mary*, version: 6th May, 2003, in: <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/united-hearts/booklet-1.htm>, 19.07.13

⁶⁷⁴ Eudes, St. John, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, New York: P.J. Kennedy and Sons, 1946, p. 110, p.

173 (cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, VIII. pp. 363-364.), as cited in: *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁵ These were the words which were said before dying by Jacinta to Lucia. Sister Lucia, *Fatima in Lucia’s Own Words*, Fatima, Portugal: Postulation Center, 1976, p. 112 27, as cited in: *Id.*

⁶⁷⁶ This was the answer given by Jesus Himself, when Sister Lucia asked Jesus why He would not convert Russia without the Holy Father making the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on May 18, 1936. Sister Lucia, *Memoirs*, p. 408, as cited in: *We consecrate ourselves to you forever O Hearts of Jesus and Mary*, Loc. cit.

⁶⁷⁷ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 252-253.

*love between them. The heart of the Mother has always followed the redemptive mission of her Son. As Jesus hung on the Cross in completion of his salvific work, Simeon's prophecy foretelling the definitive alliance of the hearts of the Son and of the Mother was fulfilled: "And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Lk 2:25). Indeed the centurion's lance that pierced the side of Christ also penetrated the heart of his sorrowful Mother and sealed it in sacrificial love."*⁶⁷⁸

From the above passage we can say that the Heart of Jesus represents the unceasing call from God, and the Heart of Mary represents the perfect response of humanity to the call from God. This powerful symbol of the Heart of Mary evokes the whole mystery of Mary, in relation to her maternity. The Pope while speaking about the union of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary in his exceptional Angelus address of September 15, 1985,⁶⁷⁹ pointed out that this "alliance of Hearts"

*"As paradigmatic of the synergy of divine and human, grace and nature, salvific initiative of God and cooperative response of man, Redemption by the God-man and "co-redemption" by Mary in the sense of Saint Paul's words to the Colossians: "In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the Church" (Col 1:24). The response of Mary's Heart became the first answer of the Church to the "call from God" and remains its most perfect reply. It also becomes the model for our response."*⁶⁸⁰

In this sense the Pope has indicated that consecrating the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is nothing but an effective consecration to the pierced Heart of the Saviour.⁶⁸¹

Pope John Paul II in his homily at Fatima on May 13, 1982, explains in clear terms the theological meaning of the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He says that the maternal heart of Mary being one with the pierced Heart of her Son Jesus was opened with the same love for man.⁶⁸² He states it in the following manner in his homily.

"When Jesus said on the Cross, "Woman, there is your son," he opened his Mother's heart in a new way, he showed her the Immaculate Heart and revealed the new dimension and the new

⁶⁷⁸ From Letter to Cardinal Jaime L. Sin, president of the International Theological Symposium on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, September 8, 1986, *Miles Immaculatae* 23 (1987): 42-43, as cited in: *Ibid.*, P. 253.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 253-254.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 254.

⁶⁸¹ Cf., *Ibid.*

⁶⁸² Cf., Stöckl, Fidelis, op. cit., P. 249.

significance of love, to which she was called in the Holy Spirit with the power of the sacrifice of the Cross...

*The Immaculate Heart of Mary was open to the word, "Woman, there is your son." It went to meet spiritually the heart of the Son opened by the soldier's lance. **The Heart of Mary was opened by the same love for man and for the world with which Christ loved man and the world**, offering himself even on the Cross, even to that stroke from the soldier...*

*The solicitude of the Mother of the Savior is solicitude for the work of salvation, the work of her Son. It is concern for salvation, for the eternal salvation of mankind....*⁶⁸³

The above statements tell us about Mary's involvement in the eternal salvation of Humankind and hence we can legitimately speak of consecration to the Immaculate Heart, because it was most intimately united to her Son's Redemptive consecration, namely: "I consecrate myself for their sakes".⁶⁸⁴

Pope John Paul II unfolds the meaning of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary further in his homily by making the following statements:

*"Consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means drawing near, **through the Mother's intercession**, to the very Fountain of life that sprang from Golgotha. . . . It means consecrating this world to the pierced heart of the Savior, bringing it back to the very source of its redemption....*

***Consecrating ourselves to Mary means accepting her help to offer ourselves and the whole of mankind to Him** who is holy, infinitely holy; it means accepting her help - by having recourse to her motherly heart, which beneath the Cross was opened to love for every human being, for the whole world - in order to offer the world, the individual human being, mankind as a whole, and all the nations to Him who is infinitely holy....*

My heart is oppressed when I see the sin of the world and the whole range of menaces gathering like a dark cloud over mankind, but it also rejoices with hope as I once more do what has been done by my Predecessors, when they consecrated the world to the heart of the Mother, when they consecrated especially to that heart those peoples which particularly need to be consecrated. Doing

⁶⁸³ John Paul II. Homily in Fatima on May 13, 1982. *Insegnamenti Giovanni Paulo II*, Vol V, 2, 1581-83 quoted in Bishop Peter Canisius Johannes Van Lierde (ed.) *Prayers and devotions from Pope John Paul II*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994, p.196, 448,450, as cited in: Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Cf., Id., P. 248.

this means consecrating the world to Him who is infinite holiness.”⁶⁸⁵

The heart of Mary is aware that the power of redemption is greater than the sins of this world. Therefore she doesn't invite humankind just for conversion, rather she invites each one of the human race to accept her help and to offer ourselves to her so that she could bring us back to the source of redemption, by uniting us with her Son's infinite Holiness.⁶⁸⁶

In other words, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means:

*“Trusting in the power of her intercession to overcome the ocean of evil in the world.”*⁶⁸⁷

*“Accepting her help to offer ourselves and the whole of humankind to Him who is holy, infinitely holy.”*⁶⁸⁸

*“Accepting her help - by having recourse to her motherly heart, which beneath the cross was opened in order to love every human being.”*⁶⁸⁹

The same Pope in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, explains how the maternal heart of Mary follows the redemptive work of her Son. He says:

*“...the mystery of the Redemption took shape beneath the heart of the Virgin of Nazareth when she pronounced her “fiat”. From then on, under the special influence of the Holy Spirit, this heart, the heart of both a virgin and a mother, has always followed the work of her Son and has gone out to all those whom Christ has embraced and continues to embrace with inexhaustible love. For that reason her heart must also have the inexhaustibility of a mother. The special characteristic of the motherly love that the Mother of God inserts in the mystery of the Redemption and the life of the Church finds expression in its exceptional closeness to man and all that happens to him. It is in this that the mystery of the Mother consists.”*⁶⁹⁰

We thus understand that the meaning of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary consists in offering ourselves to the maternal love, which is united to the

⁶⁸⁵ *Inseg* V: 2 (1982), 1573-76, 1582-84; *Portugal*, 79-83, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 176-177.

⁶⁸⁶ Cf., Id., P. 250.

⁶⁸⁷ Hardon, John A., *The History of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, in: http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Mariology/Mariology_014.htm, 18.06.13.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, No. 22, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html, 18.07.13.

mystery of redemption, in order to live the mystery of the redemption in all its depth and fullness. Through this offering we find ourselves as close as possible to the pierced Heart of Christ on the cross.⁶⁹¹

I would like to conclude our discussion on the meaning of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the following statements given by Pope John Paul II on September 22, 1986. He said:

“Our act of consecration refers ultimately to the Heart of her Son, for as the Mother of Christ she is wholly united to his redemptive mission. As at the marriage feast of Cana, when she said “Do whatever he tells you”, Mary directs all things to her Son, who answers our prayers and forgives our sins. Thus by dedicating ourselves to the heart of Mary we discover a sure way to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, symbol of the merciful love of our Savior.

*The act of entrusting ourselves to the Heart of Our Lady establishes a relationship of love with her in which we dedicate to her all that we have and are. This consecration is practiced essentially by a life of grace, of purity, of prayer, of penance that is joined to the fulfillment of all the duties of a Christian, and of reparation for our sins and the sins of the world.”*⁶⁹²

V.7. The Significance of the “Response of the Heart” in the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

The veneration of the Heart of Mary was strongly recommended by the messages of Fatima. Basing on the messages of Fatima, Leo Scheffczyk explains the fundamental concept of “*The response of the Heart*” in this devotion. According to him:

“The message of Fatima points to the core and essence of the mystery of Christ as well as to the mystery of Mary and to the intimate connection of these two mysteries. The result of this is the last possible deepening, spiritualization and internalization of Marian devotion, which – according to the message of Fatima – should pass “from heart to heart”.

One could, of course, always say that the devotion of the Heart of Mary does not mean and bring forth anything else than any other

⁶⁹¹ Cf., Rum, A., “Immaculate Heart of Mary”, in: *Dictionary of Mary: Behold your Mother*, St.Pauls, 2008², P. 211.

⁶⁹² From an address to participants in the International Theological Symposium on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, held in Fatima under the patronage of Cardinal Jaime L. Sin, archbishop of Manila, from September 14 to 19, 1986, Inseg IX: 2 (1986), 700, (beginning emphasis is author’s), as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 255.

Marian forms of devotion. This is not entirely wrong, but also not the whole truth. The call that comes from the heart and which is to be answered by the heart of someone else provides Marian devotion with new elements, new colours and shades; it equips it with "heart-tones". In this way Marian devotion gains a new power of inwardness, of spirituality and truth. This is so important, because Marian devotion is often in danger of being limited to external exercises. But when a person reacts to the opening of the heart of Mary, the reply must come "from the heart", which means from the core of the person. It has to arise out of the deepest conviction and purest intention.

*If the answer is "coming from the heart", it is also "going to the heart", namely to the heart of Mary. This is to say that the devotion to the Mother of God is directed towards the essence of the mystery of Mary and of Christ. It is not to cling to second-rate things or matters of secondary importance, and for this reason it is also not exclusively directed towards the fulfillment of personal needs (although proper petitioning should always be part of religious devotion). By being addressed to the heart of Mary, the devotion of Mary will always concentrate on what filled the heart of Mary: the glorification of God through the service for the salvation of humanity. An essential Marian devotion, coming from the heart, will always be thankful for this, will glorify and give praise in it to the love of God and of humanity. Therefore, such an essential devotion, which is done "in spirit and in truth" (cf. Jn. 4, 23) not only awakens a spirit of inner sincerity, truthfulness and uprightness in the person venerating Mary; it will also provide an objectively and externally safe path and lead straight to the core."*⁶⁹³

Leo Scheffczyk is of the firm opinion that for the security and stability of Marian devotion today this is of special need because Marian devotion is threatened to be pushed to the margins of Christian life and faith. He says that recognizing Mary as a model for our life should be separated from the direct addressing of Mary in prayer and devotion. In other words it can be said that Marian Piety should be separated from Marian veneration.⁶⁹⁴ He also says that:

*"Such intent can only be countered by directing Marian devotion in an essential way towards the centre and by practicing it in the spirit of the centre: and this is the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the symbol of the deepest union with Christ in being and in attitude."*⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹³ Scheffczyk, Leo, op. cit., Pp. 341-342, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁶⁹⁴ Cf., Ibid., P. 342.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., P. 343, (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

Leo Scheffczyk explains further that Marian devotion is concerned about self-emptying in the following manner:

“Marian devotion is not so much about self-realization, but more about self-emptying and abandoning into the love of the immaculate heart of Mary and finally of the heart of the Saviour. The message of Fatima confirms this self-emptying love for Mary by emphasizing especially the element of suffering and pain. The heart of Mary, as it is visible in the vision, is not crowned with flowers, but surrounded by thorns. This is to say that selfless love is inextricably linked with pain and suffering. (...) The heart has always been understood as the organ of the finest sensibility for suffering and with the most intimate capacity for suffering. As it was with Mary who triumphed with the sword in her heart, so every true and heartfelt love has to be a pain-filled love. “Being loved by God and to love God means suffering” (S. Kierkegaard). This suffering, however, is not wanted for its own sake (in a one-sided mysticism of suffering), but accepted as an element of sacrifice and atonement. Suffering accepted out of love (as it is with Christ and his handmaid) has the power to atone for sin, which is to say, it is able to turn sin into grace. Thus the “message of the heart” of Fatima is connected in the end with the “message of atonement”, which comes forth from the “global place of atonement”. ”⁶⁹⁶

V.8. The Object of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

The Divine Motherhood is the basis for our devotion to Mary’s Immaculate Heart. When we honor Mary’s Immaculate Heart, we honor her entire person. All veneration to Mary in relation to the mystery of Mary’s life or of a special virtue or of something concerning her body or soul have the *person of Mary* as common object. We have already mentioned that the Immaculate Heart of Mary represents Mary’s entire sanctity. An accurate description about the object of the devotion at this point will help us to understand thoroughly the meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart.⁶⁹⁷

*“In regard to the objects in the concept of cult in general, we distinguish two things - the **material** object, or that which we venerate, and the **formal** object, or the precise reason why we offer this worship or veneration. ”⁶⁹⁸*

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., (translated by: Father. Heinz Werner Schneider).

⁶⁹⁷ Cf., Murphy, John, F., *The Immaculate Heart*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., Pp. 171-172.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., P. 172.

In the case of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart the *material* object of our Marian veneration is concerned with the person of Mary in her physical and moral integrity, to which, her Heart pertains. We venerate in a special way the Heart of the Mother of God because the heart of Mary played an important role in her physical maternity, and is intimately connected with the affections of Mary's maternal soul. The Excellency of Mary's Holiness and the mysteries of her life, especially her maternity, are concentrated in the love reflected in her Heart. Therefore it is the most worthy object of religious devotion after the heart of Christ. Moreover, Mary's heart is reasonably an object of veneration inasmuch as the Church ordinarily approves for veneration only objects, which fulfill human being's spiritual, needs more adequately and correspond to human being's body and soul. Thus we say that Mary's physical heart, together with her love is the material object of the particular devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The *formal* object of our devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the august excellence of Mary's entire person, body and soul. In this devotion we focus our attention on the precise aspect of her excellence and the particular quality of Mary, namely: Mary's extraordinary holiness, and especially her love for God and man. This includes her extraordinary and singular sanctity, her virtues and gifts, and her entire interior life.⁶⁹⁹

Generally in the Marian cult, Mary is venerated for three reasons, namely, her eminent sanctity, her Maternity, and her participation in the redemptive work of Christ. But all these are intimately connected with her love. Her sanctity is seen as the fruit of sanctifying grace, which culminates in charity. Her Maternity is deeply and extremely related to love, and therefore her heart. Love preceded her Maternity, entered the act, and marked the existing relationship thereafter. And finally Mary's participation in the redemption of human beings was the fruit of her love. She consented to share in this redemptive work because of her love, and she carried out her role perfectly because of the strength of her love. Thus we see that Mary's sanctity, her Maternity, and her mission as Coredemptrix of humankind are inseparable from her love, and therefore truly reflected in her Heart. Applying this connection between Mary's sanctity and her Maternity, and between her role as Coredemptrix and her Maternity in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, we can say that the formal object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is nothing but an exaltation of Mary's love in the function of her Maternity. The material object,

⁶⁹⁹ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 172-174.

Mary's Heart, provides us with the title for the devotion and the formal object, Mary's love, provides us with the meaning of the devotion. Thus we can say that the object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the veneration of the physical Heart of Mary, which stands for her unique holiness, and which reflects her most ardent love for God and Jesus Christ her Son, and her motherly affection for human beings.⁷⁰⁰

V.9. The Purpose of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

At the very outset of our discussion we can say that the main purpose of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is to unite humankind to God through Mary's Heart. The acts of consecration and reparation are the twofold acts, which enable to accomplish this union.⁷⁰¹

V.9.1. The Act of Consecration

In an act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart, our act is ultimately referred to God because such an act can be referred ultimately to God, only for He alone has the right of complete ownership over our body and soul. There are three basic elements in every act of consecration, namely: a transition from the profane to the domain of the sacred, a constancy and stability in the new pledge, and the existence of some kind of rite. Consecration to Mary remains valid and salutary, however, because of her peculiar relationship with Him. One is consecrated to Mary only because she is God's Mother, and by her Offices, especially that of Queenship, one is closely associated with Him. Mary's Queenship plays a key role in an act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The theological foundation of consecration is Mary's universal sovereignty or dominion.⁷⁰² Let us now discuss in detail about the impact of Mary's Queenship on the Marian consecration.

The term "queen" can be understood in the proper sense as well as in the metaphorical sense. In the *proper absolute* sense, it refers to a woman who has her own authority to rule over the members of a perfect, organized society and can lead them to a common end. She exercises in her own authority the legislative, judiciary

⁷⁰⁰ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 174-175.

⁷⁰¹ Cf., Ibid., P. 175.

⁷⁰² Cf., Ibid., Pp. 175-176.

and executive power. In the *proper relative* sense, it refers to a woman who shares the dignity of a king, as the king's consort, or as the king's mother. In the *metaphorical* sense the term 'queen', indicates a certain pre-eminence or excellence in comparison with others. For example we say that theology is the 'queen' of the sciences or charity is the 'queen' of virtues. The term "queen" is also applied to Mary and she is invoked by the faithful as 'Queen'. Here the title of Queen is applied to Mary not in the *proper absolute* sense. This is because she is not the supreme ruler or a subordinate ruler. The title Queen can be applied only in the *proper relative* sense because she is the Queen in the Kingdom where Christ is the King. Christ is the one and only supreme ruler and Mary's royal privilege and power come from Him and are also entirely dependent on Him. This is because of her inseparable union with her Son Jesus Christ and she remains subordinate to Him. Mary certainly also deserves the title of Queen in the *metaphorical* sense because of her excellence and sanctity. She is a unique Queen, who surpasses all the earthly queens in dignity, power and authority, just as Christ surpasses earthly kings in dignity, power and authority. Therefore there is no model by which we can measure her status as Queen, just as there is no model by which we can measure the status of Christ as King. Pope Pius XII beautifully manifested this mutual relationship between Christ and Mary in the radio broadcast to the pilgrims at Fatima on May 13, 1946, on the occasion of the coronation of the Statue of Our Lady in the Cova da Iria. He made the following notable address:⁷⁰³

*"[Mary] is mysteriously related in the order of the hypostatic union with the most Blessed Trinity, with Him Who alone, by essence, is Infinite Majesty, King of kings and Lord of lords, being firstborn Daughter of the Father, pure Mother of the Word, beloved Spouse of the Holy Spirit. She is the Mother of the Divine King to whom from the maternal womb the Lord God gave the throne of David and enduring royalty in the House of Jacob, Who proclaimed that all power had been given to Him in heaven and on earth. **He, the Son of God, decrees for His heavenly Mother the glory, the majesty, the power of His own kingdom.** Associated as Mother and Helper with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of the redemption of mankind, she is forever most powerfully associated in the distribution of graces and divine redemption.*

*Jesus is King of the eternal ages by nature and by conquest. **Through Him, with Him, and under Him, Mary is Queen by grace, by divine relationship, by conquest, by singular election.***

⁷⁰³ Cf., Schmidt, Firmin, N., *The Universal Queenship of Mary*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 2, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1957, Pp. 495-497.

Her kingdom is as vast as that of her divine Son from whose dominion nothing is excluded."⁷⁰⁴

Pope Pius XII confirmed the significant parallel between Christ the King and Mary the Queen, in this wonderful statement. Christ is King by a natural right and by right of conquest and Mary is Queen by divine relationship and by right of conquest. The Pope refers the "divine relationship" to the incarnation, which means that this relationship was actually contracted at the moment of Mary's Fiat. Christ as Man was King from the very first moment of the incarnation. Mary through her consent to be the Mother of this King became a Queen in the proper sense of the word. Secondly Christ is King by the title of conquest, because His conquest of His Kingdom was brought about by the work of Redemption. So in a similar way, Pope Pius XII tells us, Mary is truly Queen by the title of conquest because her conquest comes from her co-operation with the work of Redemption. Hence, it is legitimate to conclude that Christ's natural right to Kingship coincides with Mary's right to Queenship by reason of her divine relationship. And Christ's title of King in virtue of His conquest coincides with Mary's right to Queenship in virtue of her co-operation with His conquest or Redemption. Through Christ the King, and subordinate to Him, Mary is Queen in the true sense of the word.

The kingdom in which Mary is the Queen is primarily a spiritual kingdom. This is because Christ Himself said that His kingdom is not of this world (Jn: 18:36). One can enter into this kingdom only through faith and baptism. But though it is primarily a spiritual kingdom, it is not exclusively spiritual. This is because the Kingdom of Christ is not limited in time or in extent. In his kingdom even the angels are under the power of Christ. Christ has authority over temporal and civil matters. All human beings, taken individually and collectively, come under the rule of Christ's royal power. These thoughts are clearly reflected in the encyclical *Quas Primas*, published by Pope Pius XI, in the following manner:⁷⁰⁵

"His kingship is founded upon the ineffable hypostatic union. From this it follows not only that Christ is to be adored by angels and

⁷⁰⁴ AAS 38 (1946): 266; Br. Stanley G. Mathews, S.M., ed., *Queen of Universe: An Anthology on the Assumption and Queenship of Mary* (Saint Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1957), 233-34, (my emphasis). Interestingly, St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort had used virtually the same terminology in his *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, no. 38, where he wrote that "Mary is Queen of heaven and earth by grace as Jesus is king by nature and conquest.", as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 102-103.

⁷⁰⁵ Cf., Id., Pp. 498-499.

men, but that to him as man angels and men are subject, and must recognize his empire."⁷⁰⁶

*"This kingdom is spiritual and is concerned with spiritual things. (...) On many occasions, when the Jews and even the Apostles wrongly supposed that the Messiah would restore the liberties and the kingdom of Israel, he repelled and denied such a suggestion. (...) Before the Roman magistrate he declared that his kingdom was not of this world. The gospels present this kingdom as one which men prepare to enter by penance, and cannot actually enter except by faith and by baptism, which, though an external rite, signifies and produces an interior regeneration."*⁷⁰⁷

"The empire of our Redeemer embraces all men... His empire includes not only Catholic nations, not only baptized persons who, though of right belonging to the Church, have been led astray by error, or have been cut off from her by schism, but also all those who are outside the Christian faith; so that truly the whole of mankind is subject to the power of Jesus Christ." Nor is there any difference in this matter between the individual and the family or the State; for all men, whether collectively or individually, are under the dominion of Christ."⁷⁰⁸

Based upon the above statements of the Pope we can conclude that Mary's Kingdom is also as vast as that of her Son's and her queenly authority extends to the entire human race, and even to angels. She is the Queen of the Universe and therefore, nations, families, and individuals owe veneration and homage to the Queen of the Universe. Catholic life acknowledges Mary as Queen, who has genuine authority over us. The best example for it is the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In the act of consecration the submissiveness of the subject to Mary remains as an important characteristic mark.⁷⁰⁹

Father William G. Most, speaks about the Queenship in the following manner:

"We should not think of her dominion as something as it were separate from that of her Son: no, in royal rule as in all else, she forms a sort of unitary principle with Him. Just as her offering melted together with His on Calvary, so as to form the one great price of Redemption, so her Queenship and His Kingship are one authority, inseparable.

⁷⁰⁶ Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, No. 13, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_11121925_quas-primas_en.html, 25.07.13.

⁷⁰⁷ Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, No. 15, in: Loc cit.

⁷⁰⁸ Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, No. 18, in: Loc cit.

⁷⁰⁹ Cf., Schmidt, Firmin, N., *The Universal Queenship of Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 499-500.

We can easily see then, that we can, with theological exactness, say much the same of consecration to her as Pope Leo XIII said of consecration to Christ the King. We recognize by our consecration that she, as Queen of the Universe with Him, already has fullest rights to our service."⁷¹⁰

Pius XII in his encyclical letter *Ad Caeli Reginam*, published on October 11, 1954, manifests the Queenship of Mary and at the same time underscores the role of analogy in order to understand the Queenship of Mary in a correct manner.⁷¹¹ He says:

*"But the Blessed Virgin Mary should be called Queen, not only because of her Divine Motherhood, but also because God has willed her to have an exceptional role in the work of our eternal salvation."*⁷¹²

*"It may be legitimately concluded that as Christ, the new Adam, must be called a King not merely because He is Son of God, but also because He is our Redeemer, so, analogously, the Most Blessed Virgin is queen not only because she is Mother of God, but also because, as the new Eve, she was associated with the new Adam."*⁷¹³

*"Certainly, in the full and strict meaning of the term, only Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is King; but Mary, too, as Mother of the divine Christ, as His associate in the redemption, in his struggle with His enemies and His final victory over them, has a share, though in a limited and analogous way, in His royal dignity. For from her union with Christ she attains a radiant eminence transcending that of any other creature; from her union with Christ she receives the royal right to dispose of the treasures of the Divine Redeemer's Kingdom; from her union with Christ finally is derived the inexhaustible efficacy of her maternal intercession before the Son and His Father."*⁷¹⁴

In the same year the Pope mandated the annual renewal of the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the newly established Feast of her Queenship.

⁷¹⁰ William G. Most, *Vatican II-Marian Council*, (Athlone, Ireland: St. Paul Publications, 1972), 136. Cf. also his commentary on the text of Pius XII's radio message in *Mary in Our Life: Our Lady in Doctrine and Devotion* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1955). 51-55, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 103-104.

⁷¹¹ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 104.

⁷¹² Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, No. 35, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_11101954_ad-caeli-reginam_en.html, 20.07.13.

⁷¹³ Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, No. 38, in: Loc. cit.

⁷¹⁴ Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, No. 39, in: Loc. cit.

Thus the correlation between the Kingship of Christ and the Queenship of Mary was not only theologically established but also liturgically.⁷¹⁵

Based on these facts we can say a consecration to Mary implies two things: *the recognition of our dependence on Mary, and the sovereignty and dominion which demand this submission.* The act itself implies a habitual attitude of dependence on Mary as our Queen.

The dogmatic foundation of consecration is the dominion and universal sovereignty of Mary. Some would regard her Maternity as also a foundation because of the association and dependence of Mother on Son and Son on Mother.⁷¹⁶ Pope John Paul II related consecration to Mary and her Immaculate Heart much more to her Motherhood. This can be seen as a further development in the teaching of the Magisterium. On the occasion of the crowning of four Marian Images at Jasna Góra on June 19, 1983, the Pope affirmed that the Kingdom of the Son is linked to the reign of his Mother in the following manner:⁷¹⁷

*“His Kingdom - and her kingdom - is not of this world. Yet it is rooted in human history, in the history of the whole human race - above all because of the fact that the Son of God, of the same substance as the Father, was made man by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. And that kingdom is definitively rooted in the history of humanity through the Cross, at the foot of which the Mother of God stood as the “Socia Redemptoris”. And, in this rooting, that kingdom endures. It endures on earth. It endures in different places on earth. Different human communities experience the maternal reign of Mary, which brings near to them the Kingdom of Christ.”*⁷¹⁸

Making such a statement does not sideline the connection between the consecration and Mary’s royalty. This can be seen very well in the statement of the Pope in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Mater*, where he says:

“Mary, the handmaid of the Lord, has a share in this Kingdom of the Son. The glory of serving does not cease to be her royal exaltation: assumed into heaven, she does not cease her saving service, which expresses her maternal mediation “until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect.” Thus, she who here on earth “loyally

⁷¹⁵ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., Pp. 104-105.

⁷¹⁶ Cf., Murphy, John, F., *The Immaculate Heart*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., P. 176.

⁷¹⁷ Cf., Id., Pp. 279-280.

⁷¹⁸ *Inseg* VI: 1 (1983), 1580, 1582; *ORE* 791: 6, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Totus Tuus*, op. cit., P. 280.

preserved in her union with her Son unto the Cross,” continues to remain united with him, while now “all things are subjected to him, until he subjects to the Father himself and all things.” Thus in her Assumption into heaven, Mary is as it were clothed by the whole reality of the Communion of Saints, and her very union with the Son in glory is wholly oriented towards the definitive fullness of the Kingdom, when “God will be all in all”. ”⁷¹⁹

Therefore we can certainly say that the divine Maternity is the foundation of Mary’s Queenship, and in this sense is also the foundation of consecration. Thus her Queenship and dominion are regarded as the adequate foundation of our act of consecration. The opening words of the formula of consecration “**Queen** of the Most Holy Rosary, Help of Christians ...” employed by His Holiness Pope Pius XII in the solemn consecration of the world is the best example for it. In this act of consecration the Pope refers directly to Mary’s sovereignty. By understanding the nature of Mary’s Queenship more deeply we can see more clearly:⁷²⁰

“The nature of our dependence on her in the order of grace and understand our consecration. Our Lord possesses dominion over us by a double right, namely, by nature, as the Son of God and King of Kings, and by an acquired title, as our Redeemer. With Mary, we see an analogy - as Christ is our King, she is our Queen. As Christ has a natural right to sovereignty by reason of the Hypostatic Union, Mary has a right by reason of the divine Maternity. Christ has an acquired right by the Redemption of men; Mary has an acquired right by reason of her Coredemption.”⁷²¹

An act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart is a marvelous tribute to Mary’s Queenship because of the value of a consecration made freely and willingly. It is also the most genuine manifestation of devotion to her Heart.⁷²²

“It is more than an ordinary prayer and more than a promise, for a true and complete act of consecration is a state whereby we habitually realize the import of our belonging to Mary. (...) In consecration to the Immaculate Heart, the whole world and all in it is separated from the profane and given over totally and perpetually to Mary’s Heart. In this way Mary is shown a complete veneration and nothing of greater significance can be offered to her.”⁷²³

⁷¹⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 41, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 20.07.13.

⁷²⁰ Cf., Murphy, John, F., *The Immaculate Heart*, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., P. 176.

⁷²¹ Ibid., Pp. 176-177.

⁷²² Cf., Ibid., P. 177.

⁷²³ Ibid.

John F. Murphy says that in consecration to the Heart of Mary there is an important part, namely, the will to exchange for the love of our Mother our own human love. He expresses it as follows:

*“In our devotion we look precisely to Mary’s love, and our acknowledging it should be characterized by a reciprocation of love: this is best expressed by an act of consecration to the symbol of Mary’s love, her Immaculate Heart. Thus the act of consecration, the greatest act of veneration, belongs to and is part of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, the greatest of Marian devotions.”*⁷²⁴

V.9.2. The Act of Reparation

The notion of Reparation is a well acquainted theme among the human beings since the fall of our first parents. In the life of a true Christian, reparation becomes a natural act, which is prompted by faith and reason. The word “reparation” comes from the Latin words *rursus* and *parare*, which means: to prepare again, to restore or to rebuild. In the common usage it refers to amend.⁷²⁵

Reparation as a theological concept belongs to the deepest mysteries of the Christian faith and it is closely connected with those of atonement, expiation, propitiation and satisfaction. Human being honours God through adoration, thanksgiving or through prayers but human being also evokes the anger of God through ones wrong doings and offences. God gratuitously might have condoned human being’s offences if He had chosen to do so, but in His Providence He judged it better to demand satisfaction for the injuries which human being had done Him. This satisfaction was made adequately to God by the suffering, passion, and death of Jesus Christ. The reparation made to the Father by Christ on the Cross is the *fundamental reparation*. We are restored to grace through the merits of Christ’s Death. By resting on Christ’s adequate and superabundant atonement we can ourselves make reparation and satisfaction for the injuries done to God.⁷²⁶

Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter *Miserentissimus Redemptor* insists on the act of reparation in the following manner:

⁷²⁴ Murphy, John, F., *Mary’s Immaculate Heart: The Meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, op. cit., P. 107.

⁷²⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 107-108.

⁷²⁶ Cf., Slater, T., *Reparation*, in: <http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/r/reparation.html>, 20.07.13.

*“For if the first and foremost thing in consecration is this, that the creature’s love should be given in return for the love of the Creator, another thing follows from this at once, namely that to the same uncreated Love, if so be it has been neglected by forgetfulness or violated by offense, some sort of compensation must be rendered for the injury, and this debt is commonly called by the name of reparation.”*⁷²⁷

The idea of reparation is also an essential element in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Reparation to Mary is rooted in her union with her Son Jesus Christ. Pope Pius XII made the following statement:

*“By God’s Will, in carrying out the work of human Redemption the Blessed Virgin Mary was inseparably linked with Christ in such a manner that our salvation sprang from the love and sufferings of Jesus Christ to which the love and sorrows of His Mother were intimately united.”*⁷²⁸

Jesus and Mary are inseparable not only in life and action but also inseparable in cult and in our acts of reparation. The notion of reparation to our Blessed Mother can be understood only from the act of reparation of our Blessed Lord, who by the sacrifice of Calvary atoned for our sins. The words of Jesus from the cross to St. John, “Behold thy Mother,” are implicitly words calling for reparation to Mary. This is because her sufferings at the foot of the cross, caused by sins of the human race, were an outrage and offense to her whom God had chosen as His Mother and Spouse, and as the Queen of humankind. Every outrage committed against our Blessed Lord is necessarily to be seen as an outrage to His Mother. This causes her more displeasure than offences committed directly against her own person.⁷²⁹

Pope John Paul II explains the mystery of Mary’s suffering in the following manner:

“The suffering of this mysterious new Daughter of Sion, Mary, is a result of the innumerable sins of all Adam’s children, sins that have caused our expulsion from Paradise.

⁷²⁷ Pius XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, No. 6, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_08051928_miserentissimus-redemptor_en.html, 20.07.13.

⁷²⁸ AAS 48 (1956) 352: *ex Iesu Christi caritate eiusque cruciatibus cum amore doloribusque ipsius Matris intime consociatis sit nostra salus profecta*. [*Haurietis Aquas: The Sacred Heart Encyclical of Pope Pius XII* Vatican Polyglot Press trans. revised by Francis Larkin, SS.CC. (Orlando, FL.: Sacred Heart Publication Center, 1974) 47], as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *The Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the Theology and Practice of Reparation*, in: <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/united-hearts/reparation.htm>, 19.07.13.

⁷²⁹ Cf., Murphy, John, F., *Mary’s Immaculate Heart: The Meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 108-109.

In Mary, therefore, in a unique way, there is revealed the salvific mystery of suffering, and the significance and fullness of human solidarity. Because the Virgin did not suffer for herself, being All Beautiful, the Ever Immaculate One: she suffered for us, in so far as she is the Mother of all. Just as Christ “bore our infirmities and endured our sufferings” (Is. 53:4) so also Mary was weighed down as by the sufferings of childbirth through an immense motherhood that makes us reborn to God. The suffering of Mary, the new Eve, alongside the new Adam, Christ, was and still is the royal path to the reconciliation of the world.”⁷³⁰

Mary’s love for God and Jesus her Son as well as her love for human beings redeemed by the Blood of Christ calls forth our reparation in our devotion to her Immaculate Heart, for the sinful ingratitude and forgetfulness of human beings. The inseparable union of Jesus and Mary in the work of Redemption invites us to integrate in some way the practice of reparation in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart.⁷³¹

“Reparation made to the Sacred Heart and reparation made to the Immaculate Heart are indeed acts which complement one another and which are most consonant with the origin, nature, and particular practices of each devotion.”⁷³²

“In the case of reparation to Mary, then, the act of reparation prepares us for the union which the act of consecration effects, and therefore along with our acts of veneration and Imitation is actually embodied in our consecration to the Immaculate Heart.”⁷³³

The reparation to the Immaculate Heart has been given great accentuation in recent years with the appearance of our Blessed Lady at Fatima. But the practice of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary started already in the year 1889.

In 1889, prompted by an interior revelation, an Italian woman named Maria Inglese instituted the pious practice of “*Communions of Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*”. This was carried out with the approval and recommendation of her Bishop. In 1904 she composed a series of prayers for each mystery of the Rosary, as well as prayers for the Holy Hour of Reparation to Mary and she brought them to Rome for its approval. On July 1, 1905, St. Pius X approved and granted indulgences for the practice of the first Saturdays of twelve

⁷³⁰ *Inseg VII/1* (1984) 904-905 [ORE 829:1], as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *The Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the Theology and Practice of Reparation*, Loc. cit.

⁷³¹ Cf., Id.

⁷³² Ibid., P. 109.

⁷³³ Ibid., Pp. 109-110.

consecutive months in honor of the Immaculate Conception. Thus, with St. Pius X, the First Saturday Devotion of Reparation to the Immaculate Heart was introduced. He later granted additional indulgences⁷³⁴ on June 13, 1912, to promote it further. Five years later, on that same date, June 13, there took place at Fatima the great manifestation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁷³⁵

“Lucy, writing in the third person, gives the account of the December 10, 1925 visit of Our Lady and the Child Jesus:

“The Most Holy Virgin appeared to her [Sister Lucy], and by Her side, elevated on a luminous cloud, was the Child Jesus. The Most Holy Virgin rested Her hand on her [Sister Lucy’s] shoulder and as She did so, She showed her a heart encircled by thorns, which She was holding in Her other hand. At the same time, the Child said:

*“**“Have compassion on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce It at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them.”***”

Then the Most Holy Virgin said to Sister Lucy:

*“**Look, My daughter, at My Heart surrounded by thorns with which ungrateful men pierce Me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at least, try to console Me and announce in My Name that I promise to assist at the moment of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep Me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of making reparation to Me.***”

*In calling for the Five First Saturdays, Our Lady was, in a way, reiterating the First Saturday devotions previously approved by the Church.”*⁷³⁶

⁷³⁴ The proclamation of the indulgence: “. . . Pius div. Prov. Pp. X.... ad fovendum pium reparationis desiderium, quo fideles ipsi cupiunt quandam exhibere satisfactionem pro execrabilibus blasphemiiis quibus Nomen augustissimum et excelsae praerogativae eiusdem beatae Virginis a scelestis hominibus impetuntur, ultro concedere dignatus est, ut universi qui primo quolibet sabbato cuiusvis mensis . . . peculiaria devotionis exercitia in honorem beatae Virginis Immaculatae in spiritu reparationis . . . peregerint.... Indulgentiam plenarium . . . lucrari valeant.”, as cited in: *Foot note No. 44*, in: *Ibid.*, P. 110.

⁷³⁵ Cf., Mulderink, Kathryn, *Saturdays and the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, in: <http://www.mariancatechist.com/formation/mary/saturdays/>, 20.07.13.

⁷³⁶ *The Apparition*, in: http://www.fatimaforbeginners.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=120&Itemid=142, 20.07.13.

From the above messages it is very clear that the act of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the exclusive wish of both the Redeemer and His Mother. And it shows the union of the Redeemer and His Mother Mary. Her Heart has no meaning without reference to the Heart of the Redeemer nor should Mary's Heart be seen in isolation from His. Msgr. Calkins refers to the messages of Fatima in order to point out some ways and means to carry out the reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He says:

*"The whole phenomenon of Fatima cannot be understood without reference to consecration **and** reparation **to** the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Sister Lúcia has been a consistent witness to the call for reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and it is from her that we learn of the specific reparatory practices requested for the First Saturday of the month: (1) confession within 8 days before or after that day; (2) the communion of reparation on the day itself; (3) the recitation of at least five decades of the rosary and (4) fifteen minutes spent in meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the rosary as an act of reparation to the Heart of Mary."*⁷³⁷

The union of Mary's Heart to the Heart of Jesus can be clearly understood from the very fact that God choose to link the peace of the world and the stability of the Church with reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The reverse side of the miraculous medal is clear evidence, which shows their hearts together.⁷³⁸ Another evidence for the union of their hearts is:

*"Sister Lúcia's understanding of the Lord's desire that the conversion of Russia be acknowledged as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that devotion to the Immaculate Heart should be put beside devotion to his Sacred Heart, a concept which she had already heard from her cousin, Jacinta Marto."*⁷³⁹

All these tell us that because of their inseparable union our reparation should be directed both to the Father in union with the Hearts of Jesus and Mary as well as to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The Congregations of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, their understanding of their vocation of offering reparation to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary can provide us some guidelines to carry out our reparation:⁷⁴⁰

"Mary is but a creature; all that she had she received from the absolute plenitude of her Son and she is essentially subordinate to

⁷³⁷ Calkins, Arthur Burton, *The Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the Theology and Practice of Reparation*, op. cit.

⁷³⁸ Cf., Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Cf., Ibid.

Him. But in that subordination she is intrinsically united to Him in such a way that His glory is reflected on her and in her. Besides, all the outrages which are done to Him, the Word Incarnate, also touch her in her dignity as the Mother of God. Their work is common to them both, and every injury done to the Redeemer has its repercussion in the Heart of the Coredemptrix.

This union is so real and so close that it is not even necessary to think explicitly of Mary in order to give consolation and reparation to her Maternal Heart. When we think of Jesus, when we love Him, when, in our adorations, in our whole life, we give Him the place to which He has a right as Son of God and Redeemer of the human race, we then console ipso facto the Heart of Mary, and we repair the injuries which have been done to her. Because of this real and objective union our Founders could speak of reparation to the Sacred Hearts by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the same time supposing that the adoration should be addressed directly to Jesus alone.

However, it is to be desired, inasmuch as it was certainly the intention of our Founders, that the intention of reparation to the Heart of Mary should be explicitly manifested, and that, for example, at the beginning of the exercise of adoration, we address ourselves to her in order to express our desire of giving satisfaction to her Heart as well as to that of her Son.”⁷⁴¹

Thus as a conclusion to our discussion on this theme we can say that: Mary through her sufferings at the Foot of the Cross and through her example of love for God leads us all to a closer union with our divine Saviour. Our acts of reparation and our consecration to Mary enable us to unite of ourselves to God through the Heart Mary, which is the purpose of our devotion to her Immaculate Heart. In all Ages our acts of reparation in atonement for our sins, Mary herself will remain as the model and “Mother of Reparation”.

The devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary explains how we honour under the symbolism of the Heart, the love and holiness of our Blessed Mother. The *Love* of Mary remains not only as the foundation and root of all her virtues but also remains as the motivating force behind every action of her life. The *Holiness* of Mary remains as the basic foundation of all her gifts and privileges. We also see that the *Love* of Mary is intimately connected with her *Maternity*. In the perfection of her maternal Heart all her Excellencies are present. In devotion to the Immaculate Heart

⁷⁴¹ Antoine Hulselmans, SS.CC., *Exposé Historique sur Le Chapitre Préliminaire de la Règle de la Congrégation des Sacrés-Coeurs* (Louvain: Études Picpuciennes, #1, 1948) 138 [A *Historical Account of the Preliminary Chapter of the Rule of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts* trans. Fathers and Brothers of the Sacred Hearts, Fairhaven, MA, n.d., 93-94], as cited in: Ibid.

the mysteries of her life and all her offices connected with her person are not taken collectively but are seen as a result of her connection with the supernatural love. All her privileges and titles, which are used in veneration to her, are seen under this aspect. The devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary because of its completeness can be called as the crown and summation of all Marian devotions. This is because from the Excellencies we see in the Heart of Mary proceeds whatever Excellency we venerate in any other Marian devotion and also vice versa, i.e., to say through the veneration of her perfection, we should ultimately come to the veneration of Mary's Immaculate Heart. This devotion has a superior sanctifying value because in this devotion we perfect ourselves completely, for we imitate Mary in all her virtues and perfections.⁷⁴²

Having discussed in detail about the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we arrive at the undeniable truth that through and with her we will definitely be able to reach God, our ultimate destination. Mary through her role as the Mother of God and through her participation in the redemptive work of her Son remains as a privileged creature by being closest to God and by sharing the intimacy love of God. Now let us examine the concept of: How Mary, as a *privileged creature*, plays an important role in our consecrations? How the principle of her Mediation plays a determining role to understand the unique role of Mary in our consecration?

⁷⁴² Cf., Murphy, John, F., *Mary's Immaculate Heart: The Meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 115-118.

Part II: The Principle of Marian Mediation and the Role of Mary in our Consecrations

V.10. Mary the “Mediatrice” of (All) Graces

Mary’s mediation can be understood only when we understand the unique role of Mary in the mystery of Christ and in the economy of our salvation. Her position in the economy of salvation is a unique one. This is very clear in the statement of Fr. Lohkamp where he says:

“[Mary’s] position in the economy of salvation is inseparable from that of her Son. Her desires and wants are His, and she is in a unique position to unite Christians fully, quickly, and effectively to Christ, so that dedication to her is in fact dedication to Christ.”⁷⁴³

V.10.1. Mediatrice in the Tradition

The early Fathers of the Church and the early Christian investigators came to the certitude that Mary’s mediation is dependent upon her role played in the economy of salvation. It was their strong belief that the answer given by her to God’s call, through her *fiat* was an event linked with the eternal destiny of mankind. They came to clarify the role played by the Mother of God in the mystery of salvation through the typology of the Eve-Mary parallel. This first theological reflection tells us that the early theologians’ first concern with Mary was not her person, but rather with her role as the new Eve, alongside Jesus Christ in the mystery of our salvation.⁷⁴⁴ The term “Mediatrice” is applied to our Blessed Lady already in the 6th Century in the East and in the 9th Century in the West. From 17th Century onwards it has been widely used by Catholics everywhere.⁷⁴⁵ The title Mediatrice, as applied to the Mother of God, is first used by Andrew of Crete (+ 740). He called her “Mediatress [*mesitis*] of the law and grace.” St. Germanus of Constantinople (+ 733), the doctor of Mary’s universal mediation called her “truly a good Mediatress [*mesiteia*] of all sinners”. The first appearance of the title “Mediatrice” in the West was in the Pseudo-Origen: *Vitae Mediatrice*. In the translation by Paul the Deacon of the Life of Theophilus, this term was used first. From the 12th Century onwards the title “Mediatrice” was applied to Mary very frequently. Laurentin collected fifty texts

⁷⁴³ Lohkamp, N., “Consecration, Personal”, op. cit., P. 209.

⁷⁴⁴ Cf., Gambero Luigi, *Patristic Intuitions of Mary’s Role as Mediatrice and Advocate: The Invocation of the Faithful for her help*, op. cit., Pp. 78-79.

⁷⁴⁵ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., “Mediatrice”, in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 336.

in which Mary is called Mediatrix. It was through the influence of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (+1153) in the Middle Ages that the doctrine of Mary's mediation became familiar in the Catholic Church. It was he who struck an immortal summary of the doctrine. He said: "*God has willed that we should have nothing that did not pass through the hands of Mary.*" From the Thirteenth Century onwards the word appears occasionally in hymns. Until the Fifteenth Century the explanation on Mary's mediation by the theologians was without contradiction. During the Sixteenth Century the reflection brought rejection in wider areas. But there was a counter reformation, which was carried out by Peter Canisius, Robert Bellarmine, Lawrence of Brindisi and Francis de Sales. They continued the tradition and stuck on to the title. The True Devotion by St. Montfort and The glories of Mary by St. Alphonsus Liguori were composed on the basis of Mary's universal mediation. These compositions indicated the sentiments of the faithful. They contributed for the further development of the doctrine until the Twentieth Century.⁷⁴⁶

In order to understand the key role, which Mary plays in our Act of Consecration towards her, it is very important to grasp the fundamental notions behind the principle of Marian mediation.

V.10.2. The Meaning of Mediatrix

A "mediator" is a person who intervenes depending upon the existing circumstances between two persons or group of persons in order to bring them together to facilitate an exchange of favours between the parties or to reconcile parties at variance. This is the notion of mediation in general.⁷⁴⁷ Mary is invoked by the Church as "Mediatrix". This is very clear through the statement of Lumen Gentium: "*Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix.*"⁷⁴⁸ In these titles to the Blessed Virgin thousands upon thousands of Christians consider Mary as the bridge that brought them closer to Christ. This happens because the Christians believe that Mary brings their sorrows and longings before God and she is the one who draws them towards God and towards the Church.⁷⁴⁹ She is also the spiritual Mother of the mystical body and in some phases of the Mediation coincides with some phases of

⁷⁴⁶ O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., Pp. 240-242.

⁷⁴⁷ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, Benzinger Brothers, Inc., 1956, Pp. 55-56.

⁷⁴⁸ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 62, in: op. cit.

⁷⁴⁹ Paredes, Joseph, *Mary and the Kingdom of God: A synthesis of Mariology*, translated by: Joseph, Daries CMF., and Josefina, Martinez MMB., St. Paul publications, 1991, P. 257.

the spiritual Motherhood. Therefore in a sense we can say that Mary is our spiritual Mother because she is our “Mediatrix”, and also that she is our “Mediatrix” because she is our spiritual Mother. Secondly she cooperated in the redemptive work of Christ, namely in the reconciliation of humankind with God, while she was still on earth. This was first accomplished on Calvary. In virtue of this function she is called “Coredemptrix” and thirdly she distributes to each individual soul the graces, which were earned by Christ and by her through the work of redemption. This function is constantly carried out by Mary until the end of the world. In virtue of this function she is called the “dispenser of (all) graces”.⁷⁵⁰ Before dealing with these aspects of her mediatorial office it is necessary to consider one of the important problems in Marian mediation. 1 Tim 2:5 says that Jesus Christ is the only mediator. If it is so then what is the necessity of Mary’s mediation? While discussing this problem, we will discuss the principle of Mary’s maternal mediation at length.

V.11. Christ’s unique mediation and Mary’s maternal mediation

The faithful pray to Mary because they consider her as their advocate and intercessor. Though it is not declared as a definite doctrine, Mary is considered as our “Mediatrix”. This can be seen from the perspective of what we repeat in Apostles Creed. In Apostles Creed we profess our belief in the communion of saints, which means that we venerate the saints and invoke their intercession for us on our behalf, in the holy community of God and His saints. Based on this unquestionable truth of faith, the doctrine of the mediation of the Blessed Virgin cannot be denied. But a grave objection can be raised against the term “Mediation”.⁷⁵¹ “Mediation” is a word, which causes disputes among the Christian confessions. Among the Protestants the doctrine of Mary’s “mediation” is considered as a denial of the unique and exclusive mediation of Christ. This is because the theology of mediation is based on the New Testament passage 1 Tim 2: 5-6 which says:

*“For there is one God; **there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all - this was attested at the right time.**”*⁷⁵²

⁷⁵⁰ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, Loc. cit.

⁷⁵¹ Cf., Rahner, Karl, *Mary Mother of the Lord: Theological Meditations*, translated by: W. J. O’Hara, Herder and Herder, 1964⁴, P. 94.

⁷⁵² My emphasis.

This gives an impression that the mediation of Mary is understood as a reality isolated from the mystery of Christ and from the mystery of the Church, as if her mediation is a second mediation.⁷⁵³

There are two different Greek words: *heis* or *monos*, to designate the adjective “one” which has been used in this Pauline text. The Greek word employed here is *heis* and this emphasizes Christ’s transcendence as mediator, because of the unique value of his redemptive death.⁷⁵⁴ It is certainly quite indisputable, that in this sense Jesus Christ is the only mediator, and no other mediator whatsoever, not even the blessed Virgin, can in any way be in question for us, for our salvation. Jesus Christ is in a definite sense the only mediator, beside whom there is no other mediator and no other Mediatrix. He is the true and only efficient cause of our salvation, as Son of God he is our salvation itself, and access of grace to God the Father. He is, therefore, the one who, by what he is and what he does forms the one unique unifying bond between God and His creation that is to be redeemed. In this sense he is the unique mediator.⁷⁵⁵ From this undeniable fact we can understand that the employment of the word *heis* by St. Paul is to establish the primacy of Christ as one mediator and it does not prevent the subsequent mediation to that of Christ. St. Paul who establishes the primacy of Christ’s mediation does not exclude the possibility of a secondary mediation or a creaturely mediation. This is very clear from his statement in 1 Tim 2: 1-4, where he says:

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

This statement of St. Paul tells us that the perfect mediation of Christ provides room and space for the secondary mediation or for the subordinate forms of mediation. On the other hand mediation of Christ is linked with the mission and it depends on it. St. Paul explains this in Gal 4:4-5 where he says:

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.”

⁷⁵³ Cf., Paredes, Joseph, op. cit., P. 257.

⁷⁵⁴ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 238.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf., Rahner, Karl, *Mary Mother of the Lord: Theological Meditations*, op. cit., Pp. 94-95.

Christ shared His mission explicitly with His apostles by saying: “*As the Father has sent me so I am sending you*” (Jn 20:21). Not only is the mission of Christ shared with every baptized person but also the adoption to become a child of God. We are also entitled to the name “Children of God” (1 Jn 3: 1) through his very divine sonship (Jn 1:2) This indicates that as “Children of God” we participate in the life and functions of Christ, the unique mediator, therefore also in His function as mediator. Participating as creatures in His mediatorial office only increases His glory.⁷⁵⁶

The fact that the one mediation of Christ allows for the subordinate and secondary mediation of the others is very well summarized by St. Thomas Aquinas. He says:

*“Christ alone is the perfect Mediator between God and man...but there is nothing to prevent others from being called mediators between God and man in so far as they cooperate in uniting men to God.”*⁷⁵⁷

From the above passages we can understand that the word “mediation” must therefore have quite a different sense from what it has when the Holy Scripture recognizes our Lord as our sole mediator. Rahner says that the word “mediation” can be used in different senses, even though the meanings are intrinsically related, and nothing is particularly surprising about it. The fact is that human language has only a very limited number of words at its disposal, to express the whole immense reality of the divine order of salvation.⁷⁵⁸

*“Consequently we ... need not be surprised or take offence, if we have to use the same word to signify two things as radically different as the mediation of the eternal Word of God made man, and that of the Blessed Virgin, who is merely a creature, however endowed with grace she may be. It is only a matter of understanding rightly, each time, what we are saying briefly, by these few inadequate human words.”*⁷⁵⁹

Despite the fact that Jesus Christ our Lord is the sole mediator, we proclaim Mary as our Mediatrix by our prayers and the honour and trust we show her. If we are to realize how truly the most Blessed Virgin can be called our Mediatrix it is well

⁷⁵⁶ Cf., Id., P. 239.

⁷⁵⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, Q 26, art. 1, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 90.

⁷⁵⁸ Cf., Rahner, Karl, *Mary Mother of the Lord: Theological Meditations*, op. cit., P. 95.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

to remind ourselves first of all, that we all of us belong together, even in regard to salvation.⁷⁶⁰

“We all pray for one another. We all do penance, and bear in common the weight of the guilt of all, just as we have contributed our share to this burden of human guilt. We also belong together in the economy of redemption. We are, as St. Paul once said, God’s coadjutors ... in a way an intermediary, a mediator of grace for others. Not of course in the sense that we have gone on high to fetch down the saving grace of the eternal God. (...) God in Jesus Christ has so established grace within the human community’s solidarity in history and eternal welfare and loss that it reaches one member through another, even though in God’s perspective, it is intended equally directly for each, in Jesus Christ, the head of the one human race. (...) Since this human instrumentality in the communion of saints already exists even on this earth, through the grace of Jesus Christ, how can those who have entered into the glory of God’s life ... have less importance for us as mediators than they had on earth? Isn’t it precisely these blessed, definitively saved, redeemed human beings who are intermediaries for us, in the full sense? (...) They are rather people who stand with us, beside us, in the holy company of the redeemed, bound together in mutual importance for each other, before the eyes of the one God. God sees us, through the eyes of his creative activity, his grace, and his mercy, as members of a great community. (...) All belong to all, and in a true sense we can say, that all are mediators for all, precisely because the individual is loved by God in as much as he has this innumerable host of brothers and sisters beside him, and is linked to them in the communion of saints. All are intermediaries. We are for all and all are for us.”⁷⁶¹

Consequently it can only be a question of: in what way and to what degree one is a mediator of grace to the other. God assigns His grace to each as he wills, including the gift and grace of being a blessing in the salvation of others. Now we can ask the question: what importance as Mediatrix the Blessed Virgin must have, now that she lives in heaven, her life and her heart now perfectly fulfilled?⁷⁶² As a reply to this question Rahner says:

“It is impossible to determine or envisage the office of Mediatrix that belongs to her, except as being of the same order as her importance was in the divine plan for the history of humankind and redemption. For, even for her, eternity is the outcome of life here on earth before death. The importance she had in the earthly history of redemption has become valid and irrevocable, precisely because she has entered by death into her ultimate eternal glory

⁷⁶⁰ Cf., Ibid., P. 96.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., Pp. 96-99.

⁷⁶² Cf., Ibid., Pp. 99-100.

and perfection. Now none has ... a more comprehensive function than the Blessed Virgin Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the earthly history of redemption."⁷⁶³

The absolutely unique *Yes* of consent of the Blessed Virgin, which co-operated in determining the whole history of the world, tells us that she, as Christ's mother was the first and foremost to participate in His mediation.⁷⁶⁴ This unique and unparalleled role of Mary in the economy of salvation is clearly highlighted in *Lumen Gentium*:

"To the heavenly messenger she replies: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word". Thus Mary, a daughter of Adam, consenting to the divine Word, became the mother of Jesus, the one and only Mediator. Embracing God's salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption."⁷⁶⁵

From the above passage we can also draw out the fact that the mediation of Mary can only be a ***subordinate participation*** in the one mediation of Jesus Christ and it cannot be a rival or a parallel mediation. This ***maternal mediation*** acts with the same intention as her Divine Son, namely, to redeem and to reconcile humankind with God and does not obscure or diminish the supreme mediation of Christ in any way rather it confirms the primacy of her Son's mediation. This is very clearly affirmed in the same document in the following statements:

"The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no wise obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power. For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ."⁷⁶⁶

"This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession

⁷⁶³ Ibid., P. 100.

⁷⁶⁴ Cf., Pp. 100-101.

⁷⁶⁵ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 56, in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 28.07.13.

⁷⁶⁶ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 60, in: Loc. cit.

continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son.... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator. For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer. Just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by the ministers and by the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is really communicated in different ways to His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source. The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary. It knows it through unfailing experience of it and commends it to the hearts of the faithful, so that encouraged by this maternal help they may be more intimately adhered to the Mediator and Redeemer.”⁷⁶⁷

In the Marian encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, Pope John Paul II dedicates an entire chapter to the maternal mediation of Mary. In this while explaining how Mary shares in a secondary and subordinate way in the mediation of Christ, the Holy Father also explains how Mary uniquely shares in the one mediation of Christ, like no other creatures. He says:

“In effect, Mary’s mediation is intimately linked with her motherhood. It possesses a specifically maternal character, which distinguishes it from the mediation of the other creatures who in various and always subordinate ways share in the one mediation of Christ, although her own mediation is also a shared mediation. In fact, while it is true that “no creature could ever be classed with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer,” at the same time “the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise among creatures to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this unique source.”⁷⁶⁸

The devotion to Mary is seen from the category of *hyperdulia*, which extends beyond the *dulia*, so too in the category of the subordinate mediation, her mediation is a *hyperdulia* of subordinate mediation because she alone is the Mother of the Saviour and she alone participated in the redemptive work of humankind.⁷⁶⁹

“The first moment of submission to the one mediation “between God and men”- the mediation of Jesus Christ - is the Virgin of

⁷⁶⁷ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 62, in: Loc. cit.

⁷⁶⁸ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 38, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 28.07.13.

⁷⁶⁹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 92-93.

*Nazareth's acceptance of motherhood. (...) The words "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord" express the fact that from the outset she accepted and understood her own motherhood as a total gift of self, a gift of her person to the service of the saving plans of the Most High. (...) Mary's motherhood, completely pervaded by her spousal attitude as the "handmaid of the Lord," constitutes the first and fundamental dimension of that mediation which the Church confesses and proclaims in her regard and continually "commends to the hearts of the faithful." (...) Mary entered, in a way all her own, into the one mediation "between God and men" which is the mediation of the man Christ Jesus. If she was the first to experience within herself the supernatural consequences of this one mediation-in the Annunciation she had been greeted as "full of grace"-then we must say that through this fullness of grace and supernatural life she was especially predisposed to cooperation with Christ, the one Mediator of human salvation. And such cooperation is precisely this mediation subordinated to the mediation of Christ. In Mary's case we have a special and exceptional mediation, based upon her "fullness of grace," which was expressed in the complete willingness of the "handmaid of the Lord".*⁷⁷⁰

Thus we see that Mary was elected, redeemed and graced in Jesus Christ. Jesus was the one mediator between God and Mary. By participating in the mediation of her Son, she was the first to experience within herself the supernatural consequences of this one mediation. Without Him she would have been a slave without a redeemer, her maternal womb without fruit and a woman without the grace of God. She owes all that to her Son.⁷⁷¹ Her participation in the mediation of her Son as a secondary mediator also manifests her *universal* mediation. The Pope highlights this in the following manner:

"After her Son's departure, her motherhood remains in the Church as maternal mediation: interceding for all her children, the Mother cooperates in the saving work of her Son, the Redeemer of the world. In fact the Council teaches that the "motherhood of Mary in the order of grace...will last without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect." With the redeeming death of her Son, the maternal mediation of the handmaid of the Lord took on a universal dimension, for the work of redemption embraces the whole of humanity. Thus there is manifested in a singular way the efficacy of the one and universal mediation of Christ "between God and men". Mary's cooperation shares, in its subordinate character, in the universality of the mediation of the Redeemer, the one Mediator."⁷⁷²

⁷⁷⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 39, Loc. cit.

⁷⁷¹ Cf., Paredes, Joseph, op. cit., P. 260.

⁷⁷² John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 40, in: op.cit.

From our above reflection we can derive the following conclusions: Mary is intimately united to her Son, Jesus Christ; the function of Mary's mediation is subordinate and secondary to mediation of Christ; it is totally dependent on it; it is completely derivative from the mediation of Jesus; her mediation surpasses all the mediation of the angels and saints because of the character of hyperdulia; her mediation does not hinder the mediation of Jesus, but rather fosters it. Thus we can conclude our discussion, by saying that this special and individual grace of God bestowed on Mary does not diminish, but increases the glory of the one mediator. For that reason, therefore, we can truly say of Mary, on account of her role in the history of redemption, that in the communion of saints she is the intercessor for all of us, the Mediatrix of all Graces.⁷⁷³

V.12. Mary's Mediation as Coredemptrix

The term "Redemption" refers to the total meritorious and satisfactory acts performed to the eternal Father by Christ, here on earth, in and through the sacrifice of the cross, to reinstate the humankind into the eternal Father's former friendship.⁷⁷⁴ The title "Coredemptrix" appears in the Catholic literature already in the late 14th century.⁷⁷⁵ This title refers to Mary's unique participation and cooperation with her Son, Jesus Christ in the historic redemption of humankind.⁷⁷⁶ According to St. Thomas Aquinas Mary, in speaking her *fiat*, was the representative of the entire human race. She was the first recipient of the grace of the Redemption in her Immaculate Conception and she was also, by the sacrifice of her spousal and

⁷⁷³ Cf., Id., P. 264, ; Cf., Rahner, Karl, *Mary Mother of the Lord: Theological Meditations*, op. cit., P. 101.

⁷⁷⁴ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, op. cit., P. 57.

⁷⁷⁵ The first recorded use of the title, "Coredemptrix" can be dated back to the fourteenth century, for example, in the liturgical book found in St. Peter's in Salzburg, with the verses:

<i>'Pia, dulcis et benigna</i>	Loving, sweet, and kind,
<i>Nulla prorsus luctu digna</i>	Wholly undeserving of any sorrow
<i>Si fletum hinc eligeres</i>	If henceforth you chose weeping,
<i>Ut compassa Redemptori,</i>	As one suffering with the Redeemer,
<i>Captivato transgressori</i>	For the captive sinner
<i>Tu Coredemptrix fieres.'</i>	Coredemptrix would you be. (As cited in: Footnote No. 67, in:

Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, Queenship Publishing, 1993, P. 14; further references as mentioned by the author are: Cf., *Oratione* of St. Peter's Salzburg, in Dreves-Blume, *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, v. 46, n. 79, p. 126; Cf., *PLanctus oratius...ad B. Virginem Filium de cruce depositum sinu tenentem*, in R. Laurentin, *Le titre de Coredemptrice, Etude historique in Marianum*, 13, 1951, p. 429.

⁷⁷⁶ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., "Co-Redemptrix", in: *Dictionary of Mary*, op. cit., P. 88.

maternal heart on Calvary, its first collaborator throughout the entire earthly life of her Son.⁷⁷⁷

Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris* speaks clearly about how Mary shares in the redemptive death of her Son, Jesus Christ. He says:

*“After the events of her Son’s hidden and public life, events which she must have shared with acute sensitivity, it was on Calvary that Mary’s suffering, besides the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human point of view but which was mysterious and supernaturally fruitful for the redemption of the world. Her ascent of Calvary and her standing at the foot of the Cross together with the Beloved Disciple were a special sort of sharing in the redeeming death of her Son.”*⁷⁷⁸

This statement of the Pope clearly indicates that the title “Coredemptrix” can be fittingly applied to Mary. But Non-Catholics (also some Catholics) deny the application of this title to Mary. They say that Mary was just a physical and material instrument chosen by God to bring the Redeemer into the world. They believe that Christ is the only Redeemer and there is no other Redeemer beside Him, who won for us the salvation. We can well understand the feelings and the conviction of Non-Catholics (including some Catholics), because the term “Coredemptrix” as applied to Mary is confusing. This is because it puts her on the same level of her Divine Son and implies that she is our Redeemer in the same way that He is. In English and in other modern languages the prefix “co-” refers to *complete equality*. In the Latin language from which the term Coredemptrix comes, indicates Mary’s cooperation or collaboration in the redemption as secondary, subordinate, and dependent on that of Christ.⁷⁷⁹ The explanation of “Coredemptrix” by Mark Miravalle makes it very clear. He defines it in the following manner:

*“The prefix “Co” comes from the Latin “cum” which means “with”. The title of **Coredemptrix** applied to the Mother of Jesus never places Mary on a level of equality with Jesus Christ, the divine Lord of all, in the saving process of humanity’s Redemption. Rather, it denotes Mary’s singular and unique sharing with her Son in the saving work of redemption for the human family. The Mother of Jesus **participates in the redemptive***

⁷⁷⁷ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *The Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the Theology and Practice of Reparation*, op. cit.

⁷⁷⁸ John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, No. 25, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris_en.html, 31.07.13.

⁷⁷⁹ Cf., Id.

work of her Saviour Son, who alone could reconcile humanity with the Father in his glorious divinity and humanity.”⁷⁸⁰

The Catholics on the contrary are in agreement that Mary co-operated in Christ’s redemptive work not only materially and physically but also formally. This coredemptive role of Mary began when she willingly gave birth to the Redeemer and that she dispenses to us the graces of the Redemption, which was already accomplished by Christ alone. This can be considered technically as her cooperation in the *subjective* Redemption. The majority of the Catholics believe that Mary contributed to the redemptive act of Christ on Calvary. This means that Mary together with Christ in a *subordinate* and *dependent* manner to that of her Son, Jesus Christ atoned or satisfied for our sins. By offering her Son on Calvary, she merited every grace necessary for salvation and joined the Saviour’s sacrifice on Calvary to appease the ‘wrath’ of God. This is considered to be her cooperation in the *objective* Redemption. The fact that Mary brought the Redeemer into the world indicated her *mediate* or *remote* cooperation in the work of Redemption. The fact that she joined her merits and satisfactions with those of her Son on Calvary at the foot of the cross for the same purpose indicates her *immediate* or *proximate* cooperation in the work of Redemption.⁷⁸¹

The exposition of Fr. Faber⁷⁸², who was influenced by Cardinal Newman, on this theme, gives us a deeper insight into the notion of Mary’s co-operation with her Son in the redemption of the world. He states:

⁷⁸⁰ Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 95.

⁷⁸¹ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, op. cit., Pp. 57-59, ; Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., “*Co-Redemptrix*”, op. cit., P. 89.

⁷⁸² Frederick William Faber (28 June 1814 - 26 September 1863), British hymn writer and theologian, was born at Calverley, Yorkshire, where his grandfather, Thomas Faber, was vicar. (...) In January 1837, he was elected fellow of National Scholars Foundation. Meanwhile, he had given up the Calvinistic views of his youth, and had become an enthusiastic follower of John Henry Newman. In 1841, a travelling tutorship took him to the continent; on his return, he published a book called *Sights and Thoughts in Foreign Churches and among Foreign Peoples* (London, 1842), with a dedication to his friend the poet Wordsworth. He accepted the rectory of Elton in Huntingdonshire, but soon after went again to the continent, in order to study the methods of the Roman Catholic Church. After a prolonged mental struggle, he joined the Catholic Church in November 1845. He founded a religious community at Cotton Hall, also known as St Wilfrid’s, in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, called Wilfridians (which ultimately merged in the Oratory of St Philip Neri, with John Henry Newman as Superior). In 1849, a branch of the oratory - subsequently independent - was established in London, first in King William Street, and afterwards at Brompton (Brompton Oratory), over which Faber presided until his death. In spite of his weak health, an almost incredible amount of work was crowded into those years. He published a number of theological works, and edited the *Oratorian Lives of the Saints*. (*Biography of Frederick William Faber*, in: <http://www.poemhunter.com/frederick-william-faber/biography/>, 02.07.14.)

*“She [Mary] co-operated with our Lord in the redemption of the world in a quite a different sense, a sense which can never be more than figuratively true of the saints. **Her free consent was necessary to the Incarnation**, as necessary as free will is to merit according to the counsels of God. ... **She consented to His Passion; and if she could not in reality have withheld her consent, because it was already involved in her original consent to the Incarnation, nevertheless, she did not in fact withhold it, and so He went to Calvary as her free-will offering to the Father.** ... Lastly, it was a co-operation of a totally different kind from that of the saints. **Theirs was but the continuation and application of a sufficient redemption already accomplished, while hers was a condition requisite to the accomplishment of that redemption.** One was a mere consequence of an event which the other actually secured, and which only became an event by means of it. Hence it was more real, more present, more intimate, more personal, and with somewhat of the nature of a cause in it, which cannot in any way be predicated of the co-operation of the saints.”⁷⁸³*

Faber is further of the opinion that “Mary has three distinct rights to the title of Coredempstress”. He states it in the following manner:

“She has a right to it, first of all, because of her co-operation with our Lord in the same sense as the saints, but in a singular and superlative degree. She has a second right to it, which is peculiar to herself, because of the indispensable co-operation of her Maternity. She has a third right to it, because of her dolors ... These last two rights are unshared by any other creature, or by all creatures collectively. They belong to the incomparable magnificence of the Mother of God.”⁷⁸⁴

Faber also says that the term “Coredemptrix” as applied to Mary is not only justified but also expresses the whole truth. He says:

“In fact, there is no other single word in which the truth could be expressed; and, far off from His sole and sufficient redemption as Mary’s co-operation lies, her co-operation stands alone and aloof from all the co-operation of the elect of God. This, like some other prerogatives of our Blessed Lady, cannot have justice done it by the mere mention of it.”⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸³ *The Foot of the Cross or the Sorrows of Mary* (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Co., 1956) 372-374, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Mary the Coredemptrix in the Writings of Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)*, in: <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/calkins/corfaber.htm>, 31.07.13.

⁷⁸⁴ *The Foot of the Cross or the Sorrows of Mary*, 375, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Mary the Coredemptrix in the Writings of Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)*, Loc. cit.

⁷⁸⁵ *The Foot of the Cross or the Sorrows of Mary*, 377, as cited in: Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Mary the Coredemptrix in the Writings of Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)*, Loc. cit.

Thus Faber illustrates beautifully the sole and sufficient redemption wrought by Jesus and the co-operation of Mary as the elect of God in terms of the difference between *latria*, *hyperdulia*.⁷⁸⁶

V.12.1. Implicit references of Coredemptrix in the Sacred Scripture

Interestingly neither the title “Coredemptrix” as applied to Mary nor an equivalent word for it is anywhere mentioned in the Bible. But there are certain references in the Bible in which this doctrine is implicitly mentioned. The first reference to Mary’s intimate co-operation with the Redeemer is mentioned in the *Proto-evangelium* (**Genesis 3:15**). This reference is also clearly mentioned in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

“The books of the Old Testament describe the history of salvation, by which the coming of Christ into the world was slowly prepared. These earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and are understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of the woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light. When it is looked at in this way, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin.” (Cf. Gen 3:15)”⁷⁸⁷

After the fall of our first parents, God addresses the serpent with the following words: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head and you shall lie in wait for his heel.” (Gen: 3:15). In this passage the seed of the woman refers to Christ; the crushing of the serpent’s head refers to the work of Redemption figuratively and the “woman” foreshadows the Mother of the Redeemer, who shares in the same enmity between herself and the serpent, as does her redeeming seed. This passage foreshadows the unique work of Redemption by Christ, as well as Mary’s intimate co-operation with the Redeemer in this salvific act. Mary is here foreshadowed as the world’s Coredemptrix.⁷⁸⁸ Mary’s redemptive victory over Satan in union with her Son, Jesus Christ which is foreshadowed in Genesis 3:15, is clearly explained in the apostolic

⁷⁸⁶ Cf., Calkins, Arthur Burton, *Mary the Coredemptrix in the Writings of Frederick William Faber* (1814-1863), Loc. cit.

⁷⁸⁷ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 55, in: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 31.07.13.

⁷⁸⁸ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, op. cit., Pp. 61-62.

letter of Pius IX, where he declared the dogma of Immaculate Conception. The Pope says:

*“I will put enmities between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed”-taught ...by this divine prophecy the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold: That his most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the evil one was significantly expressed. Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and man, assumed human nature, blotted the handwriting of the decree that stood against us, and fastened it triumphantly to the cross, so the most holy Virgin, united with him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with him and through him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with her immaculate foot.”*⁷⁸⁹

The second reference in the Scripture is found in the New Testament passage:

Luke 1: 26-38. The Role of Mary as the Coredemptrix can be derived from this Annunciation scene. From the greeting of the angel “Hail, full of grace, The Lord is with you” (Lk 1: 28) we can conclude that she was already prepared by the eternal Father for the intimate and unique co-operation with her Son, the Redeemer in the work of salvation. The fullness of grace enabled her to participate in the mission of the work of redemption perfectly. This also indicates that she was elected by the eternal Father to be the Mother of the Redeemer. The choice made by God opened to her the doors to co-operate in the redemptive mission of her Son. Lk 1: 35 indicates that Mary will become the Mother of God through the Power of the Holy Spirit. She becomes the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, the divine sanctifier, who can distribute all graces. It is the Holy Spirit, which prepares Mary at each stage of her co-redemptive role. The free consent of the handmaid to the invitation sent by the eternal Father: “*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word*” (Lk 1: 38) is given by Mary knowingly and willingly to the new plan of salvation offered by the Father. Her free consent to co-operate with the Redeemer intimately gave a human body to the Redeemer. In a true sense God made the Redemption of the world dependent upon Mary’s consent, which she gave freely and knowingly. Thus the choice of God, the providential union of the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and the consenting co-operation gives flesh to the infinite Word in the redemptive incarnation. All this points out to the underscoring fact that Mary’s co-

⁷⁸⁹ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, in: <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm>, 31.07.13.

redemptive role of intimate and unique co-operation with the Redeemer began at the Annunciation.⁷⁹⁰

The next reference to Mary's role as Coredemptrix comes from the prophecy of Simeon in the New Testament at the presentation of the Lord in the Temple (cf. Lk 2: 25-37). Simeon prophetically addresses to the Mother of the Redeemer the following words: "*and a sword will pierce through your own heart, too*" (**Lk 2: 35**). At this moment the redemptive suffering of her Son at Calvary was anticipated in her Motherly Heart. The Mother goes in the order of suffering, which leads to the climax of Redemption on the Cross. This prophecy once again confirms that at the price of profound suffering, Mary will share intimately in the redemptive work of her Son. It will lead her in the obedience of faith to the side of the suffering Redeemer.⁷⁹¹ This is clearly expressed by Pope John Paul II in the *Redemptoris Mater* where he says:

*"Simeon's words seem like a second Annunciation to Mary, for they tell her of the actual historical situation in which the Son is to accomplish his mission, namely, in misunderstanding and sorrow. While this announcement on the one hand confirms her faith in the accomplishment of the divine promises of salvation, on the other hand it also reveals to her that she will have to live her obedience of faith in suffering, at the side of the suffering Savior, and that her motherhood will be mysterious and sorrowful."*⁷⁹²

The final reference to Mary's role as Coredemptrix is found in the Gospel of **St. John 19:26-27** which says:

"When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to her, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Son, behold your mother!' And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home."

Mark Miravalle gives a beautiful explanation to this scriptural passage, which I would like to quote here. He says:

*"The term, 'Woman' unites the Mother of the Saviour at the foot of the cross with the 'Woman' of the seed of redemption in Genesis (cf. Gen: 3:15), who will work **with the Redeemer** in the triumph over Satan and his seed of sin and death. Mary, who previously was the Handmaid of the Lord at the Annunciation, becomes through the bitter suffering of Calvary the **Woman** with*

⁷⁹⁰ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 4-5, ; Cf., Id. P. 62.

⁷⁹¹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 9.

⁷⁹² John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 16, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html, 31.07.13

*the **Man** of Redemption, the **Mother** with the **Son** of Salvation, the **Lady (Domina)** with the **Lord (Dominus)** of all Peoples.”⁷⁹³*

Pope John Paul II based on this passage brings out his rich teaching on the role and doctrine of “Coredemptrix”. In his apostolic letter *Redemptoris Mater* he says:

“On that wood of the Cross her Son hangs in agony as one condemned. (....) How great, how heroic then is the obedience of faith shown by Mary in the face of God’s “unsearchable judgments”! How completely she “abandons herself to God without reserve, offering the full assent of the intellect and the will” to him whose “ways are inscrutable” (cf. Rom. 11:33)! And how powerful too is the action of grace in her soul, how all-pervading is the influence of the Holy Spirit and of his light and power! Through this faith Mary is perfectly united with Christ in his self-emptying. (....) At the foot of the Cross Mary shares through faith in the shocking mystery of this self-emptying. This is perhaps the deepest “kenosis” of faith in human history. Through faith the Mother shares in the death of her Son, in his redeeming death.”⁷⁹⁴

V.12.2. Coredemptrix in the Teaching of the Tradition

The early Fathers saw Mary’s unequalled participation in the redemption of the humankind already in the Eve-Mary parallelism and they never failed to compare Mary with Eve in their writings. St. Justin the Martyr, St. Irenaeus and Tertullian compared the Annunciation with the temptation of Eve. The contributions of the Greek Fathers developed this parallelism. St. Gregory of Nyssa contrasted Mary’s happiness in the birth of Child Jesus with the sorrow and pain of Eve. St. John Chrysostom compared the loss of paradise through Eve with the gain of eternal life through Mary.⁷⁹⁵ The Eve-Mary parallelism of the Fathers of the Church is well summarized in the Bull of *Ineffabilis Deus* in the following manner:

“It is the clear and unanimous opinion of the Fathers that the most glorious Virgin, for whom “he who is mighty has done great things,” was resplendent with such an abundance of heavenly gifts, with such a fullness of grace and with such innocence, that she is an unspeakable miracle of God -- indeed, the crown of all miracles and truly the Mother of God; that she approaches as near to God himself as is possible for a created being; and that she is above all men and angels in glory. Hence, to demonstrate the original innocence and sanctity of the Mother of God, not only did they

⁷⁹³ Id., P. 12.

⁷⁹⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 18, op. cit.

⁷⁹⁵ Cf., O’Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., Pp. 139-140.

*frequently compare her to Eve while yet a virgin, while yet innocence, while yet incorrupt, while not yet deceived by the deadly snares of the most treacherous serpent; but they have also exalted her above Eve with a wonderful variety of expressions. Eve listened to the serpent with lamentable consequences; she fell from original innocence and became his slave. The most Blessed Virgin, on the contrary, ever increased her original gift, and not only never lent an ear to the serpent, but by divinely given power she utterly destroyed the force and dominion of the evil one.”*⁷⁹⁶

The initial idea concerning the doctrine of Mary's Co-redemption is portrayed in the role of a New and second Eve. This doctrine found its beginning with St. Justin the Martyr (+ 163).⁷⁹⁷ The fundamental idea of this parallelism can be very clearly seen in the teaching of St. Irenaeus. He says:

*“...the Virgin Mary was found obedient, saying ‘Behold Thy handmaid, O Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word.’ Eve, however, was disobedient; for, while yet a virgin, she did not obey. Just as she...became disobedient and became the cause of death to herself and the whole human race, so Mary...being obedient became for herself and the whole human race the cause of salvation.”*⁷⁹⁸

The wisdom of the Fathers of the Eve-Mary parallelism says that just as Eve had an active sharing with Adam in the loss of the salvation for the human family, so Mary had an active sharing with Jesus Christ, the second Adam, in the redemption of the human family. Just as Eve had a secondary and a subordinate role to that of Adam, Mary too had a secondary and a subordinate role to that of Jesus Christ. And hence it can be said that Eve was the *Co-Peccatrix* with the *Peccator*; Mary is the *Coredemptrix* with the *Redeemer*. The Incarnation was for the Fathers the Redemption, which has already begun and in it is anticipated. They saw the climax of the divine act of redemption in the passion and death of the Redeemer on the cross. Mary's moral and physical co-operation in the Redemptive Incarnation is the reason that she is seen as *Coredemptrix* by the Fathers.⁷⁹⁹

“Explicitly ... the patristic texts emphasizing this antithetical parallelism bear exclusively on Our Lady's mediate cooperation in the world's Redemption, in the sense explained above. Implicitly, however, they may be said to contain later developments of the doctrine. In other words, the theologians of subsequent centuries

⁷⁹⁶ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, in: <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm>, 31.07.13.

⁷⁹⁷ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, op. cit., P. 62.

⁷⁹⁸ St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, I, 3, c. 22, n. 4; PG 7, 958-959, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 6.

⁷⁹⁹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 6-8.

*simply elaborated and carried to its ultimate conclusions what had been preached in the Church from the remotest times only in embryonic fashion. Thus, in the 12th century, and particularly under the influence of Arnold of Chartres (d. 1160), we begin to find frequent and specific allusions to the redemptive character of Our Lady's compassion and her oblation on Calvary."*⁸⁰⁰

From 17th Century onwards the doctrine was deepened with many theological insights by Catholic writers and their teaching on the doctrine of Mary's Coredemption is exactly used in the teaching of the present time ⁸⁰¹

V.12.3. Coredemptrix in the Teaching of the Magisterium⁸⁰²

The Eve-Mary parallel and contrast could be noticed in the writings from the very earliest Fathers of the Church. It was mainly based on Mary's role in the Incarnation, especially at the time of Annunciation. This teaching was later developed in the Church and the accent of Eve-Mary parallelism was shifted to Mary's role in Calvary.⁸⁰³ Her co-operation in the work of redemption paved way for the development of the doctrine of Mary's Coredemption. This doctrine is found in every Pope from Leo XIII up to Pope John Paul II. Since this doctrine could evoke wrong impressions and misunderstandings the Popes were very careful in addressing Mary with the title "Coredemptrix" in their teachings. One thought was fundamentally clear in the teaching of all the Popes, namely, Mary's contribution to the redemption was only in association with her divine Son and not independently. The following teachings of the Magisterium will make us understand it very clearly.

- **Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Iucunda Semper*, Sept 8, 1884.**

"When she professed herself the handmaid of the Lord for the mother's office, and when, at the foot of the altar, she offered up her whole self with her Child Jesus-then and thereafter she took her part in the laborious expiation made by her Son for the sins of the world. It is certain, therefore, that she suffered in the very depths of her soul with His most bitter sufferings and with His torments. Moreover, it was before the eyes of Mary that was to be finished the Divine Sacrifice for which she had borne and brought up the Victim. As we contemplate Him in the last and most piteous of those Mysteries, there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, who, in a miracle of charity, so that she might receive us as her

⁸⁰⁰ Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, op. cit., P. 63.

⁸⁰¹ Cf., Ibid.

⁸⁰² The teaching of the Magisterium on Co-redemptrix is based on the compilation of Most, William, G., *Church Teaching on Mary's Cooperation in the Redemption of Mankind*, in: <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/marya3a.htm>, 31.07.13.

⁸⁰³ Cf., O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 141.

sons, offered generously to Divine Justice her own Son, and died in her heart with Him, stabbed with the sword of sorrow.”⁸⁰⁴

- **Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Adiutricem populi*, Sept. 5, 1895.**

“From her heavenly abode she began, by God’s decree, to watch over the Church, to assist and befriend us as our Mother; so that she who was so intimately associated with the mystery of human salvation is just as closely associated with the distribution of the graces which for all time will flow from the Redemption”.⁸⁰⁵

- **St. Pius X, Encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, Feb. 2, 1904.**

“When the supreme hour of the Son came, beside the Cross of Jesus there stood Mary His Mother, not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that her Only Son was offered for the salvation of mankind, and so entirely participating in His Passion, that if it had been possible she would have gladly borne all the torments that her Son bore (S. Bonav. 1. Sent d. 48, ad Litt. dub. 4). And from this community of will and suffering between Christ and Mary she merited to become most worthily the *Reparatrix* of the lost world (Eadmeri Mon. De Excellentia Virg. Mariae, c. 9) and **Dispensatrix of all the gifts** that Our Savior purchased for us by His Death and by His Blood.”⁸⁰⁶

- **Benedict XV, Epistle, *Admodum probatur*, June 20, 1917.**

“With her suffering and dying Son she suffered and almost died, so did she surrender her mother’s rights over her Son for the salvation of human beings, and to appease the justice of God, so far as pertained to her, she immolated her Son, so that it can be rightly said, that she together with Christ has redeemed the human race.”⁸⁰⁷

- **Pius XI, Encyclical, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, May 8, 1928.**

“May the most benign Virgin Mother of God smile on this purpose and on these desires of ours; for since she brought forth for us Jesus our Redeemer, and nourished Him, and offered Him as a victim by the Cross, by her mystic union with Christ and His very

⁸⁰⁴ Leo XIII, *Iucunda Semper*, No. 3, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091894_iucunda-semper-expectatione_en.html, 30.07.13.

⁸⁰⁵ Leo XIII, *Adiutricem populi*, Nos. 7, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05091895_adiutricem_en.html, 30.07.13.

⁸⁰⁶ Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, No. 12, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

⁸⁰⁷ AAS 10, 182, as cited in: Most, William, G., *Church Teaching on Mary’s Cooperation in the Redemption of Mankind*, op. cit.

special grace she likewise became and is piously called a repararess."⁸⁰⁸

- **Pius XI, Radio Message to Lourdes, April 28, 1935. Osservatore Romano, April 29, 1935.**

*"O Mother of piety and mercy, who as Coredemptrix stood by your most sweet Son suffering with Him when He consummated the redemption of the human race on the altar of the cross ... preserve in us, we beg, day by day, the precious fruits of the Redemption and of your compassion."*⁸⁰⁹

- **Pius XI, Papal Allocution to Pilgrims of Vicenza, 30 November 1933. Osservatore Romano, December 1, 1933.**

*"From the nature of His work the Redeemer ought to have associated His Mother with His work. For this reason we invoke her under the title of Coredemptrix. She gave us the Savior, she accompanied Him in the work of Redemption as far as the Cross itself, sharing with Him the sorrows of the agony and of the death in which Jesus consummated the Redemption of mankind. And immediately beneath the Cross, at the last moments of His life, she was proclaimed by the Redeemer as our Mother, the Mother of the whole universe."*⁸¹⁰

- **Pius XII, Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943.**

*"It was she, the second Eve, who, free from all sin, original or personal, and always more intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam, sin-stained by his unhappy fall, and her mother's rights and her mother's love were included in the holocaust."*⁸¹¹

- **Pius XII, Radio Message to Fatima, May 13, 1946.**

*"For having been associated with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of human redemption, as Mother and cooperatrix, she remains forever associated with Him, with an almost unlimited power, in the distribution of graces which flow from the Redemption."*⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁸ Pius XI, *Misererentissimus Redemptor*, No. 21, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_08051928_miserentissimus-redemptor_en.html, 31.07.13.

⁸⁰⁹ Most, William, G., *Church Teaching on Mary's Cooperation in the Redemption of Mankind*, op. cit.

⁸¹⁰ This reference is not found in the compilation of William, G. Most. It is cited from: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 18.

⁸¹¹ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, No. 110, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html, 30.07.13.

⁸¹² Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 19.

- **Pius XII, Encyclical, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, Oct. 11, 1954.**

*“If Mary, in taking an active part in the work of salvation, was, by God's design, associated with Jesus Christ, the source of salvation itself, in a manner comparable to that in which Eve was associated with Adam, the source of death, so that it may be stated that the work of our salvation was accomplished by a kind of “recapitulation,” in which a virgin was instrumental in the salvation of the human race, just as a virgin had been closely associated with its death; if, moreover, it can likewise be stated that this glorious Lady had been chosen Mother of Christ “in order that she might become a partner in the redemption of the human race”; and if, in truth, “it was she who, free of the stain of actual and original sin, and ever most closely bound to her Son, on Golgotha offered that Son to the Eternal Father together with the complete sacrifice of her maternal rights and maternal love, like a new Eve, for all the sons of Adam, stained as they were by his lamentable fall,” then it may be legitimately concluded that as Christ, the new Adam, must be called a King not merely because He is Son of God, but also because He is our Redeemer, so, analogously, the Most Blessed Virgin is queen not only because she is Mother of God, but also because, as the new Eve, she was associated with the new Adam.”*⁸¹³

- **Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* Nos. 57, 58 & 61.**

*“This union of the Mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to His death.”*⁸¹⁴

*“The Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, grieving exceedingly with her only begotten Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart with His sacrifice, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth.”*⁸¹⁵

*“She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace.”*⁸¹⁶

⁸¹³ Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, No. 38, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_11101954_ad-caeli-reginam_en.html, 31.07.13.

⁸¹⁴ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 57, in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 28.07.13.

⁸¹⁵ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 58, in: Loc. cit.

⁸¹⁶ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 61, in: Loc. cit.

- **John Paul II, Allocution at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guayaquil, given on Jan 31, 1985, reported in L'Osservatore Romano Supplement of Feb. 2, 1985 and in English L'Osservatore Romano, March 11, 1985.**

*“Crucified spiritually with her crucified Son (cf. Gal 2:20), she contemplated with heroic love the death of her God, she ‘lovingly consented to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth’ (Lumen Gentium #58) ... as she was in a special way close to the Cross of her Son, she also had to have a privileged experience of his Resurrection. In fact, Mary’s role as co-redemptrix did not cease with the glorification of her Son.”*⁸¹⁷

Thus from the teachings of the Sacred Scripture, from the teachings of the tradition and from the teachings of the Magisterium we can arrive at the following conclusions, concerning Mary’s mediation as Coredemptrix: 1) The eternal Father elected Mary from among all women to be the Coredemptrix with the Redeemer; 2) She was sustained by the Holy Spirit in fulfilling her God-elected role as Coredemptrix; 3) No other creature in heaven or on earth could ever equate the inner participation of Mary in the work of Redemption; 4) Her co-operation in the work of redemption was not as equal to her Son, rather it was a co-operation in a subordinate and in a dependent manner on her Son, the only Redeemer; 5) Her role as Coredemptrix began with her free consent at the Annunciation. By her readiness to give flesh to the infinite Word Mary merited the title and honour of Coredemptrix. Her union with her Son and His mission of the work of salvation is manifested in the virginal conception of Christ; 6) The pilgrimage of Mary in faith and obedience and in union with her Son continued until Calvary; 7) The climax of her role as Coredemptrix with her Son, the Redeemer of humankind was on Calvary; 8) Together with Christ and under Him Mary made reparation (*de congruo*) for the sins of humankind and together with Christ and under Him Mary merited (*de congruo*) the reinstatement of the human race in the friendship of God; 9) On Calvary together with Christ and under Him, Mary offered her Divine Son to the eternal Father for the reconciliation of humankind with God; 10) Through her free consent to the invitation of the eternal Father, through her intimate co-operation with her Son and through her intense suffering with the Redeemer at the foot of the cross, Mary became the “Coredemptrix” in its fullest expression.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁷ Most, William, G., *Church Teaching on Mary’s Cooperation in the Redemption of Mankind*, op. cit.

⁸¹⁸ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 8, 23, ; Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., Our Lady’s Coredemption, in: Carol, Juniper B (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, op. cit., P. 410.

There are three moments in Mary's work as Mediatrix in the economy of salvation. St. Bonaventure classifies them in the following manner: the price of our salvation, the moment of paying that price on Calvary and the moment of distributing the price of salvation. The third phase of her mediation wins her the title: "Mary, Dispenser of All Graces".⁸¹⁹ Let us now discuss about this important role of Mary at the heart of the Church.

V.13. Mary, Dispenser of All graces

Mary participated in the work of salvation by bringing the Redeemer into this world and by co-operating with Him in His redemptive work. In the teaching of the Church another important aspect is also taught together with the teaching of Mary's co-operation in the Redemption, namely, she is the "Distributor of all Graces". When we say Mary is the "Mediatrix", it refers to her *maternal mediation* with Christ the one Mediator and to her specific role in the distribution of the graces acquired by Jesus at Calvary. This role of Mary as "*Dispenser of All Graces*" is the result of her role as *Coredemptrix*. She is seen as the Dispenser of all graces of Jesus because of her special participation in acquiring the graces of redemption together with and under her Son. Mary participated in a unique manner in the *objective redemption*: the acquisition of the graces of Redemption by Jesus Christ, and therefore she fittingly participates in the distribution of these graces of Redemption to the human family, which is theologically called *subjective redemption*. Through this role she, as a Spiritual Mother nourishes the faithful of Christ's body in the order of grace.⁸²⁰

*"When we say that Our Lady is the Dispenser of all graces we mean that all favours granted by God to all men are granted in view and because of Mary's intercession. We say **all** favours and graces, without exception, that is: habitual grace, the infused virtues (theological and moral), the gifts of the Holy Ghost, all actual graces, and finally all favours of the natural order insofar as they may help us attain eternal life."*⁸²¹

⁸¹⁹ Cf., Appollonio, Alessandro, M., *Mary Mediatrix of all Graces*, in: Mark, I, Miravalle (ed.), *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, op. cit., P. 429.

⁸²⁰ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 102.

⁸²¹ Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, op. cit., P. 66.

By exalting Mary as the “Dispenser of All Graces the Church does not teach that the faithful should ask for God’s graces in Mary’s name only. It teaches that whether we mention her name or not, we get the graces through her intercession.”⁸²²

V.13.1. Mary, Dispenser of All Graces in the Sacred Scripture

- **Mediatrix at the Annunciation (Lk 1: 26-38)**

The first reference which reveals Mary as the “Dispenser of All Graces” for us is **Lk 1: 38**: “*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word*”. This passage refers to Mary’s free and active co-operation in the incarnation. The free consent of Mary to be the Mother of Christ, the God man, mediates to the world Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour and source of all graces. St. Irenaeus tells us that Mary is the cause of our salvation, through her free and physical mediation of the New Adam, who is the source of our salvation in grace.⁸²³

Pope John Paul II explains this mediatory role of Mary in the following manner:

*“The first moment of submission to the one mediation “between God and man” - the mediation of Jesus Christ - is the Virgin of Nazareth’s acceptance of motherhood.... Mary’s motherhood, completely pervaded by her spousal attitude as “handmaid of the Lord,” constitutes the first and fundamental dimension of that mediation which the Church confesses and proclaims in her regard and ‘continually commends to the hearts of the faithful....’”*⁸²⁴

Pope Pius XII too clearly points out that it is through the ‘Yes’ of Mary that the source of all graces of redemption came to the human family:

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.... And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace” (Jn 1:14, 16). Mary’s moral and physical mediation of Christ as Mother brought into the world the Uncreated Grace from which flows every grace received in his Body, which constitutes the People of God. The Church confirms: “From Him flows out into the body of the Church all light through which the faithful receive supernatural enlightenment, and every grace, through which they become holy, as He himself is holy....”*⁸²⁵

⁸²² Cf., Ibid., P. 67.

⁸²³ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 30.

⁸²⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 38, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 29-30.

⁸²⁵ Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici Corporis*, 1943, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 30.

- **Mediatrice at the Visitation (Lk 1: 39-42)**

The second reference in the Sacred Scripture is the event after the Annunciation, namely, the visit of Mary to the House of Zachariah and the greeting of Elizabeth. **Lk 1: 41** says: “*the babe leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*” The Church sees in the joyful leap of the unborn John the Baptist a more profound revelation of a sanctifying action through the presence of Mary. Mary’s physical presence is a mediating cause for the joyful leap of the unborn Baptist and also for his mother Elizabeth, who was immediately filled with the Holy Spirit. The physical presence of Mary, the Mediatrice together with the unborn Mediator at this scene of visitation was an important grace filled event, which brought forth the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit. In other words the presanctification of St. John the Baptist in the womb by the power of the Holy Spirit came through the mediating presence of the fruitful Handmaid of the Lord.⁸²⁶ This is the reason why the Church professes that “*John the Baptist was... holy, just, and filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb of his mother.*”⁸²⁷

- **Mediatrice at the Wedding at Cana (Jn 2: 1-11)**

The presence and the participation of Mary at the wedding at Cana manifest her concern for human beings. This scriptural passage explicitly manifests the role of Mary as Mediatrice of grace. At this wedding, Mary takes steps to meet the needs of the people through her personal mediation to her Son, Jesus by saying “*They have no wine...Do whatever he tells you*” (Jn 2: 3-5). The action of Jesus, who miraculously turned the water into wine, shows the response of Jesus to the intercessory efforts of His Mother. This scriptural passage manifests that Mary through her mediation role enters into the radius of her Son’s messianic mission and salvific power. She places herself between her divine Son and the human race. The intercessory role of Mary points out that she as a mother has the right to do so. She as a spokeswoman of her Son’s will, speaks and acts in the name of Jesus.⁸²⁸ The role Mary as the Spiritual Mother to the entire human family is manifested at Cana. The motherly intercession for the human family by Mary is to bring the needs of the human family into

⁸²⁶ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrice, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 31.

⁸²⁷ Pope Innocent XIII, Profession of Faith of Durandus of Osca, 1208, D 421: “*Ioannemque Baptismam ab eo missum esse sanctum et iustum et in utero matris suae Spiritu Sancto repletum*”, as cited in: Ibid.

⁸²⁸ Cf., Paredes, Joseph, *Mary and the Kingdom of God*, op. cit., Pp. 262-263.

communion with the salvific mission and power of Christ, the one Mediator.⁸²⁹ This role of Mary, as Spiritual Motherhood towards the disciples of Jesus flows from her divine Motherhood.

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Mater* beautifully describes the mediation role of Mary at the Wedding at Cana.

“The description of the Cana event outlines what is actually manifested as a new kind of motherhood according to the spirit and not just according to the flesh, that is to say Mary’s solicitude for human beings, her coming to them in the wide variety of their wants and needs. At Cana in Galilee there is shown only one concrete aspect of human need, apparently a small one of little importance (“They have no wine”). But it has a symbolic value: this coming to the aid of human needs means, at the same time, bringing those needs within the radius of Christ’s messianic mission and salvific power. Thus there is a mediation: Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs and sufferings. She puts herself “in the middle,” that is to say she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother. She knows that as such she can point out to her Son the needs of mankind, and in fact, she “has the right” to do so. Her mediation is thus in the nature of intercession: Mary “intercedes” for mankind. And that is not all. As a mother she also wishes the messianic power of her Son to be manifested, that salvific power of his which is meant to help man in his misfortunes, to free him from the evil which in various forms and degrees weighs heavily upon his life. The Mother of Christ presents herself as the spokeswoman of her Son’s will, pointing out those things which must be done so that the salvific power of the Messiah may be manifested. (...) Her faith evokes his first “sign” and helps to kindle the faith of the disciples.”⁸³⁰

“This maternal role of Mary flows, according to God’s good pleasure, “from the superabundance of the merits of Christ; it is founded on his mediation, absolutely depends on it, and draws all its efficacy from it.” It is precisely in this sense that the episode at Cana in Galilee offers us a sort of first announcement of Mary’s mediation, wholly oriented towards Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power.”⁸³¹

⁸²⁹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 33.

⁸³⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 21, in: op. cit.

⁸³¹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, No. 22, in: op. cit.

Thus the mediation of Mary does not supersede the mediation of Jesus but rather Jesus' mediation reaches us through Mary. Through her, Jesus draws close to us and acts in us and we reach Jesus through her.⁸³²

• **Mediatrice at the Foot of the Cross (Jn 19: 26-27)**

The dying Redeemer after completing the redemptive sacrifice for the entire humanity, entrusted John to Mary and Mary to John, by speaking the following words: "*Woman behold your son...son behold your mother*" (Jn 19: 26-27). These words of the Saviour at the Foot of the Cross establish Mary as the *new spiritual and universal Mediatrice* for the human family in the order of grace. The one who was known only as Mary is now publicly declared by the Saviour as the *Woman*, the *Mother* and the *Mediatrice* of the graces of redemption. The words of Jesus: "*Woman behold your son*" indicates Christ's gift of the role of Mediatrice of graces which is indeed a sublime dignity for his co-redeeming mother, and His words: "*son, behold your mother*" indicates that the gift of Christ to the human race is at the same time a *sanctifying gift* for the fallen human family. The Redeemer granted His mother the gift of Mediatrice of graces as a fruit of His dying sacrifice for humanity and as a fruit of her co-redemptive participation.⁸³³

Pope John Paul II affirms that the role of Mediatrice of graces is implicit in the title "Mother":

*"We recall that Mary's mediation is essentially defined by her divine motherhood. Recognition of her role as Mediatrice is moreover implicit in the expression "our Mother," which presents the doctrine of Marian mediation by putting the accent on her motherhood. Lastly, the title "Mother in the order of grace" explains that the Blessed Virgin co-operates with Christ in humanity's spiritual rebirth."*⁸³⁴

The mediation of Mary by bringing the author and source of all graces to the world is known as *remote* mediation and the mediation of Mary by distributing the graces merited at the foot of the cross to the human family by her intercession is theologically called *immediate* mediation.⁸³⁵ Though these scriptural references

⁸³² Cf., Paredes, Joseph, *Mary and the Kingdom of God*, op. cit., P. 263.

⁸³³ Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredeematrix, Mediatrice, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 34-35.

⁸³⁴ John Paul II, Wednesday Audience of October 1, 1997; L'Osservatore Romano, English edition, October 8, 1997, p. 11, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 104.

⁸³⁵ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 104.

clearly manifest Mary as the dispenser of all graces one should keep in mind that they are only indicators to the underlying fact and not proofs.⁸³⁶

V.13.2. Mary, Dispenser of All Graces in the Teaching of the Tradition

As in the case of Coredeptrix, there is no explicit reference to the title Mary, the Dispenser of all Graces in the testimonies of the ancient Fathers of the Church. It is generally implied in the teaching of the early Fathers concerning Mary's role as the second Eve. However there are certain references, which go beyond the Patristic understanding of the role of Mary as New Eve.⁸³⁷

- **St. Cyril of Alexandria (+ 444)**

*"Hail Mary Theotokos, venerable treasure of the whole world ... it is you through whom the Holy Trinity is glorified and adored, ...through whom the tempter, the devil is cast down from heaven, through whom the fallen creature is raised up to heaven, through whom that all creation, once imprisoned by idolatry, has reached knowledge of the truth, through whom holy baptism has come to believers ... through whom nations are brought to repentance...."*⁸³⁸

- **St. Germain of Constantinople (+ 733)**

*"No one is saved except through you, O Theotokos; no one secured a gift of mercy, save through you... in you all peoples of the earth have obtained a blessing...."*⁸³⁹

- **St. Peter Damian (+ 1072)**

*"As the Son of God has designed to descend to us through you [Mary], so we also must come to him through you."*⁸⁴⁰

*"In your hands are the treasures of the mercies of God."*⁸⁴¹

- **St. Bernard of Clairvaux (+ 1153)**

*"God has placed in Mary the plenitude of every good, in order to have us understand that if there is any trace of hope in us, any trace of grace, any trace of salvation, it flows from her."*⁸⁴²

⁸³⁶ Cf., Carol, Juniper, B., *Fundamentals of Mariology*, op. cit., P. 69.

⁸³⁷ Cf., Ibid.

⁸³⁸ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Hom. In Deiparam*, PG 65, p. 681, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 36.

⁸³⁹ St. Germanus or Pseudo-Germanus, *Oratio V in Ann. SS. Deiparae*, PG 93, 322 BC, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 37.

⁸⁴⁰ St. Peter Damian (d. 1072), *Serm. 46, PL 144, 761 B*, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, Loc. cit., P. 37.

⁸⁴¹ St. Peter Damian, *Serm. 44, PL 144, 740*, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, Loc. cit., P. 37.

*“This is the will of Him who wanted us to have everything through Mary.”*⁸⁴³

- **St. Bernadine of Siena (+ 1444)**

*“This is the process of divine graces: from God they flow to Christ, from Christ to his Mother, and from her to the Church.... I do not hesitate to say that she has received a certain jurisdiction over all graces.... They are administered through her hands....”*⁸⁴⁴

- **St. Grignon de Montfort (+ 1716)**

*“God the Son imparted to his mother all that he gained by his life and death, namely, his infinite merits and his eminent virtues. He made her the treasurer of all his Father had given him as heritage. Through her he applies his merits to his members and through her he transmits his virtues and distributes his graces. She is his mystical channel, his aqueduct, through which he causes his mercies to flow gently and abundantly.”*⁸⁴⁵

- **St. Alphonsus Liguori (+ 1787)**

*“God, who gave us Jesus Christ, wills that all graces that have been, that are, and will be dispensed to men to the end of the world through the merits of Jesus Christ, should be dispensed by the hands and through the intercession of Mary.”*⁸⁴⁶

These sayings of the Fathers, Doctors, Mystics and Saints undeniably underscore the role of Mary as universal Mediatrix of All Graces of Redemption. Their teachings can be very well summed up in the following words of St. Montfort:

*“God the Holy Spirit entrusted his wondrous gifts to Mary, his faithful spouse, and chose her as the dispenser of all he possesses, so that she distributes all his gifts and graces to whom she wills, as much as she wills, how she wills and when she wills. No heavenly gift is given to men which does not pass through her virginal hands. Such indeed is the will of God, who has decreed that we should have all things through Mary.... Such are the views of the... early Fathers.”*⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴² St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Hom. in nativitat. B.V.M.*, n. 6, *PL* 183, 441, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, Loc. cit., P. 38.

⁸⁴³ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Hom. in nativitat. B.V.M.*, n. 7, *PL* 183, 441, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, Loc. cit., P. 38.

⁸⁴⁴ St. Bernadine of Siena (d. 1440), *Sermon V de nativitate B.M.V.*, cap. 8; op. omn., v. 4, (Lugduni, 1650), p.96. See also St. Bonventure(d. 1274),*sermo VI de maternitate B.M. Virginis*, op. omn., V. 9 (Quaracchi, 1901), pp. 720-1; and St. Albert or Pseudo-Albert, *Mariale*, q. 164; op. omn., ed. Borgnet, v. 37, Parisiis, 1898, p. 241, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, Loc. cit., P. 38.

⁸⁴⁵ *True Devotion to Mary*, 24, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P.296.

⁸⁴⁶ St. Alphonsus Liguori (d. 1787), *The Glories of Mary*, Ch. 5, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 39.

⁸⁴⁷ *True Devotion to Mary*, 25, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P.296.

V.13.3. Mary, Dispenser of All Graces in the Teaching of the Magisterium⁸⁴⁸

- Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Supremi Apostolatus officio*. Sept 1, 1883.

*“We deem that there could be no surer and more efficacious means to this end than by religion and piety to obtain the favour of the great Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, **the guardian** of our peace and **the minister to us of heavenly grace**, who is placed on the highest summit of power and glory in Heaven, in order that she may bestow the help of her patronage on men who through so many labours and dangers are striving to reach that eternal city.”⁸⁴⁹*

- Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Superiore anno*, August 30, 1884.

*“We have a confident hope that God will at length let Himself be touched and have pity upon the state of His Church, and give ear to the prayers coming to Him through her whom He has chosen to be **the dispenser of all heavenly graces**.”⁸⁵⁰*

- Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Octobri mense adventante*, Sept 22, 1891.

*“With equal truth may it be also affirmed that, by the will of God, **Mary is the intermediary** through whom is distributed unto us this immense treasure of mercies gathered by God, for mercy and truth were created by Jesus Christ. Thus as no man goeth to the Father but by the Son, so **no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother**.”⁸⁵¹*

- Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Iucunda semper*, Sept 8, 1894.

*“The recourse we have to Mary in prayer follows upon the office she continuously fills by the side of the throne of God as **Mediatrix of Divine grace**; being by worthiness and by merit most acceptable to Him, and, therefore, surpassing in power all the angels and saints in Heaven.”⁸⁵²*

*“For this cause do we repeatedly celebrate those glorious titles of **her ministry as Mediatrix**. Her do we greet who found favour with*

⁸⁴⁸ The entire compilation of the teaching of the Magisterium presented here is based on the compilation presented by: Most, William G., *Church Teaching on Mary as Mediatrix of (All) Graces*, in: <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/marya4a.htm>, 30.07.13.

⁸⁴⁹ Leo XIII, *Supremi Apostolatus officio*, No. 1, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01091883_supremi-apostolatus-officio_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

⁸⁵⁰ Leo XIII, *Superiore anno*, No. 1, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_30081884_superiore-anno_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

⁸⁵¹ Leo XIII, *Octobri mense adventante*, No. 4, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_22091891_octobri-mense_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

⁸⁵² Leo XIII, *Iucunda semper*, No. 2, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091894_iucunda-semper-expectatione_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

God, and who was in a single manner filled with grace by Him so that the superabundance thereof might overflow upon all men."⁸⁵³

- **Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Adiutricem populi*, Sept 5, 1895.**

*"From her heavenly abode she began, by God's decree, to watch over the Church, to assist and befriend us as our Mother; so that she who was so intimately associated with the mystery of human salvation is just as **closely associated with the distribution of the graces** which for all time will flow from the Redemption."*⁸⁵⁴

*Among her many other titles we find her hailed as "our Lady, **our Mediatrix**," "the **Reparatrix** of the whole world," "**the Dispenser of all heavenly gifts**".*"⁸⁵⁵

- **Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Diuturni temporis*, Sept 5, 1898.**

*"We shall cherish and preserve inviolate, ever thanking her and proclaiming her benefits. From her, as from an abundant spring, are derived the streams of heavenly graces. "**In her hands are the treasures of the mercies of the Lord**" (St. John-Damascene, Sermon I. on the Nativity of the blessed Virgin). "God wisheth her to be the beginning of all good things" (St. Irenaeus, Contra Valen., J. iii. cap. 33)."*⁸⁵⁶

- **Leo XIII, *Parta humano generi*, Apostolic Letter, Sept 8, 1901.**

*"So may the most powerful Virgin Mother, who once 'cooperated in love that the faithful might be born in the Church', be even now the means and **mediatrix of our salvation**. [Citing St. Augustine, De sancta Virginitate 6.]"*⁸⁵⁷

- **St. Pius X, Encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, Feb. 2, 1904**

"Nevertheless, by this companionship in sorrow and suffering already mentioned between the Mother and the Son, it has been allowed to the august Virgin to be the most powerful mediatrix and advocate of the whole world with her Divine Son (Pius IX. Ineffabilis). The source, then, is Jesus Christ "of whose fullness we have all received" (John i., 16), "from whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh

⁸⁵³ Leo XIII, *Iucunda semper*, No. 6, in: Loc. cit., (my emphasis). Both articles Nos. 2 & 6 are not found in the compilement of Most, William G., (my Quotes).

⁸⁵⁴ Leo XIII, *Adiutricem populi*, No. 7, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05091895_adiutricem_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

⁸⁵⁵ Leo XIII, *Adiutricem populi*, No. 8, in: Loc. cit., (my emphasis). Article No. 8 is my Quote and it is not found in the compilement of William, G. Most.

⁸⁵⁶ Leo XIII, *Diuturni temporis*, No. 1, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05091898_diuturni-temporis_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

⁸⁵⁷ ASS 34, 1901, 195, as cited in: Most, William G., *Church Teaching on Mary as Mediatrix of (All) Graces*, op. cit., (my emphasis).

increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity” (Ephesians iv., 16). But Mary, as St. Bernard justly remarks, is **the channel** (*Serm. de temp on the Nativ. B. V. De Aquaeductu n. 4*); or, if you will, the connecting portion the function of which is to join the body to the head and to transmit to the body the influences and volitions of the head - We mean the neck. Yes, says St. Bernardine of Sienna, “she is **the neck of Our Head**, by which He communicates to His mystical body all spiritual gifts” (*Quadrag. de Evangel. aetern. Serm. x., a. 3, c. iii.*).⁸⁵⁸

- **Pius XII, Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943.**

“May she, then, the most holy Mother of all the members of Christ, to whose Immaculate Heart We have trustfully consecrated all mankind, and who now reigns in heaven with her Son, her body and soul refulgent with heavenly glory - may she never cease to beg from Him that copious streams of grace may flow from its exalted Head into all the members of the Mystical Body.”⁸⁵⁹

- **Pius XII, Radiomessage to Fatima, *Bendito seia*, May 13, 1946.**

“... having been associated, as Mother and Minister, with the King of martyrs in the ineffable work of human Redemption, she is always associated, with a practically **measureless power, in the distribution of the graces** that derive from the Redemption.... And her kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion.”⁸⁶⁰

- **John XXIII, Epistle to Cardinal Agagianian, Legate to Marian Congress in Saigon, Jan 31, 1959.**

“For the faithful can do nothing more fruitful and salutary than to win for themselves the most powerful patronage of the Immaculate Virgin, so that by this most sweet Mother, there may be opened to them, all the treasures of the divine Redemption, and so they may have life, and have it more abundantly. Did not the Lord will that we have everything through Mary?”⁸⁶¹

- **Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, Nos. 61-62**

“She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the

⁸⁵⁸ Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, No. 13, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum_en.html, 30.07.13, (my emphasis).

⁸⁵⁹ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, No. 111, in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html, 30.07.13.

⁸⁶⁰ AAS 38, 19465, 266, as cited in: Most, William G., *Church Teaching on Mary as Mediatrix of (All) Graces*, op. cit., (my emphasis).

⁸⁶¹ AAS 51, 1959, 88, as cited in: Most, William G., Loc. cit.

work of the Saviour in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace."⁸⁶²

I just want to mention here the comment made by Fr. William G. Most on the topic "Mediatrice of All Graces". He said:

*"Although Vatican II did not add the words "of all graces," it added a note on the above passage, in which it refers us to the texts of Leo XIII, *Adiutricem populi*, St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, Pius XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, and Pius XII, *Radio message to Fatima*. Leo XIII in that text spoke of her, as we saw above, as having "practically limitless power." St. Pius X said she was the "dispensatrix of all the gifts", and is the "neck" connecting the Head of the Mystical Body to the Members. But all power flows through the neck. Pius XII said "Her kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion."*⁸⁶³

Thus we see that in the teaching of the Papacy, the mediation of Our Lady has been one of the fundamental themes. The entire teaching of the Magisterium can be summed up in the theological statement of M.J. Scheeben:

*"Not only Mary's whole position of Mediatrix, but also her preceding mediatorial functions are entirely designed for a universal mediation of grace, and condition the communication of all grace without exception."*⁸⁶⁴

When the Church teaches that Mary is the Dispenser of All Graces, it means that all the graces of Redemption granted by God to fallen humanity reach us through the intercession of Mary. The Mother of God, who remains subordinate and perfectly conformed to the Will of her divine Son, distributes the graces of Redemption to the human family by her willed intercession. It doesn't mean that the graces of Christ will not be distributed unless we invoke Mary directly. It only means that whether we call upon Mary's name directly or not, we receive all graces through her actual and personally willed intercession.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶² Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 61, in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 28.07.13; the article no. 62 on Mary's mediation by Paul VI has been already quoted in the other section (2. Christ's unique mediation and Mary's maternal mediation) of our discussion and hence to avoid repetition I quote here only the article no. 61.

⁸⁶³ Most, William G., *Church Teaching on Mary as Mediatrix of (All) Graces*, op. cit.

⁸⁶⁴ M.J. Scheeben, *Mariology*, II, (St. Louis, 1956), 265, as cited in: O'Carroll, Michael, *Theotokos*, op. cit., P. 242.

⁸⁶⁵ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 105.

V.13.4. The Holy Spirit and Mary, Dispenser of All Graces

The mediation of Mary did not end after her divine Son's departure. After Christ had entrusted her to John, who represented the community of Christ's disciples, the motherhood of Mary continued to remain in the Church as maternal mediation. A special bond of relationship began to be formed between Mary, the Mother and the Church. Mary through her intercession continues to co-operate in the saving work of her Son. She intercedes for all her children and co-operates in the act of Resurrection. At Pentecost, Mary was present in the Upper Room with the infant Church, which was to receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor and Sanctifier (cf. Jn 14:26, 16:12; 1Pet 1:2). She was not passively just one among the rest of the disciples. Mary's presence and prayers of intercession for the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost had a singularly efficacious effect.⁸⁶⁶ The Second Vatican Council states:

*"We see the apostles before the day of Pentecost "persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren", (Acts 1: 14) and Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation."*⁸⁶⁷

The Church is always aware of the fact that there is an ever profound union of the Holy Spirit with Mary. This profound union between Holy Spirit and Mary, from the beginning of the work of the Redeemer is an intimate communion and spousal relationship. Mark Miravalle explains this profound union in the following manner:

"From the moment of Mary's immaculate entry into human existence, she was in profound union with the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, from which her fullness of grace flowed. It was the Holy Spirit, who mysteriously overshadowed the obedient Virgin in his providential mission at the Annunciation that immediately led to the Word becoming flesh for our redemption (cf. Lk 1:35,38-, Mt 1:18, Gal. 4:4-5). The Virgin "was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 1:18, 20). When Mary's visitation to Elizabeth effected the sanctification of the unborn Baptist, the presence of the Holy Spirit was immediately manifested for "...Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!'" (Lk 1:41-42). This intimate union of the Spirit and the Bride (cf. Rev 22:17) is again manifested at the Presentation of the infant Lord in the

⁸⁶⁶ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 49-50, ; Cf., Paredes, Joseph, *Mary and the Kingdom of God*, op. cit., P. 263.

⁸⁶⁷ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 59, in: op. cit.

*temple, where the Holy Spirit inspired Simeon to enter the temple and inform the Virgin Coredemptrix that, "a sword will pierce your own heart, too" (Lk 2:25, 27, 35). This **communio** of Spirit and human Spouse must ultimately lead to the Cross, for their union is unconditionally dedicated to the salvific mission of the Redeemer and Mediator.*"⁸⁶⁸

After the price of the Redemption has been paid, the fruits of the Redemption have to be distributed. Mary, the Mediatrix, and the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, who played an active and joint role in the work of salvation by bringing the world its redeemer at the Annunciation, will also jointly accomplish the full aspect of the redemption of humanity in distributing the graces of eternal life to the People of God. Therefore the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit and the maternal mediation of Mary will rightly continue further in intimate union until the final and glorious coming of the victorious Lord (Rev. 15:3). Theophanes of Nicaea in the East took notice of the divine and intimate union between the Sanctifier and the Mediatrix in the mystery of distribution of graces.⁸⁶⁹ He says:

*"She receives wholly the hidden grace of the Spirit and amply distributes it and shares it with others, thus manifesting it.... The Mother [Mary] ...is the dispenser and distributor of all the wondrous uncreated gifts of the divine Spirit, which makes us Christ's brothers and coheirs, not only because she is granting the gifts of her natural Son to his brothers in grace, but because she is bestowing them on these as her own true sons, though not by ties of nature but of grace."*⁸⁷⁰

M.J. Scheeben's explanation on the co-operation between the Holy Spirit and the Mediatrix gives an important breakthrough in understanding the mystery of their joint role in distribution of graces of redemption in a mysterious way.⁸⁷¹ He says:

*"The distinguishing mark of her person [Mary] as bride of Christ is conceived fully in her capacity of bearer and temple of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the foundation for this special power and dignity of her activity must be traced to this capacity of her person.... Mary is the organ of the Holy Spirit, who works in her in the same way that Christ's humanity is the instrument of the **Logos**. And this in a*

⁸⁶⁸ Miravalle, Mark, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 50-51.

⁸⁶⁹ Cf., *Ibid.*, P. 51.

⁸⁷⁰ Theophanes of Nicaea (d. 1381), *Serm. in SS Deiparam*, ed. M. Jugie, A.A., Lateranum, Nova Series, Rome, 1935, I, 51; cf. M. O'Carroll, C.S. Sp., *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Delaware, 1982, p. 340-1. For a Patristic summary of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary, cf. Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, n. 26, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., Pp. 51-52.

⁸⁷¹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Loc. cit.*, P. 53.

more complete and distinctive sense than can be the case in other created beings."⁸⁷²

From the above explanation of M.J. Scheeben, we can understand that just as Christ is the human instrument of the divine Word, so is Mary the human instrument of the Holy Spirit. Therefore her sanctifying role in the distribution of the graces as the human instrument of the Holy Spirit is one unified mission of sanctification given by the eternal Father.⁸⁷³

St. Maximillian Kolbe states that the Holy Spirit has chosen to act only through the mediation of Mary. He understood that Mary through her profound union with the Holy Spirit plays a key role as Mediatrix.⁸⁷⁴ He states:

*"The Holy Spirit is in Mary after the fashion, one might say, in which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word, is in his humanity. There is, of course, this difference: in Jesus there are two natures, divine and human, but one single person who is God. Mary's nature and person are totally distinct from the nature and person of the Holy Spirit. Still, their union is so inexpressible and so perfect that the Holy Spirit acts only by the Immaculata, his spouse...."*⁸⁷⁵

St. Maximillian goes to the extreme of saying that Mary is the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit never took the form of flesh but the Holy Spirit right from the first moment filled and sustained her Immaculate Conception. So Mary became the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and hence in a sense she is the incarnation of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷⁶ The following quote make it very clear:

*"The third Person of the Blessed Trinity never took flesh; still, our human word "spouse" is far too weak to express the reality of the relationship between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit. We can affirm that she is, in a certain sense, the 'incarnation' of the Holy Spirit."*⁸⁷⁷

St. Maximillian explains that the Holy Spirit is the divine Sanctifier and at the same time the distributor of graces in the following manner:

⁸⁷² M.J. Scheeben, *Mariology*, v. II, p.186, as cited in: Ibid.

⁸⁷³ Cf., Id.

⁸⁷⁴ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., P. 111.

⁸⁷⁵ St. Maximilian Kolbe, *Letter to Fr. Salezy Mikolajczyk*, 28 July 1935, as found in Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, p. 41, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 54.

⁸⁷⁶ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 54.

⁸⁷⁷ St. Maximilian Kolbe, *Conference 5 February 1941*, as found in Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, p. 50, as cited in: Ibid.

“By the power of the redemption wrought by Christ, the Holy Spirit transforms the souls of men into temples of God; he makes us adoptive children of God and heirs of the heavenly kingdom, as St. Paul declares: ‘But you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God’ (ICor 6: 11).... Similarly, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read that the distribution of graces depends on the will of the Holy Spirit ... (I Cor 12:7-11).”⁸⁷⁸

He further confirms that the divine Sanctifier fulfills the mission of earthly sanctification only through the spousal mediation of Mary, the Dispenser of All Graces in the following manner:

“The union between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit is so inexpressible, yet so perfect, that the Holy Spirit acts only by the Most Blessed Virgin, his Spouse. This is why she is the Mediatrix of all graces given by the Holy Spirit. And since every grace is a gift of God the Father through the Son and by the Holy Spirit, it follows that there is no grace which Mary cannot dispose of as her own, which is not given to her for this purpose.”⁸⁷⁹

We can conclude our discussion on this topic by saying that: The Holy Spirit is the spouse of Mary and Mary is the human instrument of the Holy Spirit, where the Spirit uniquely and profoundly dwells. Both are one in the unified mission of the earthly sanctification and the Holy Spirit acts only through Mary. Therefore all the graces of the redemption, which come from the Holy Spirit, are distributed through Mary, the Mediatrix. And hence it would be right to say that Mary is the dispenser of all graces to the entire human race.⁸⁸⁰

V.14. Theological Conclusions on Mary, the Mediatrix

The doctrine of Mary, as Mediatrix of All Graces, is not officially defined by the Magisterium. But our discussion on this topic tells us that we have very clear descriptions and explanations about it in the encyclical statements and in the teaching of the tradition. For the past two hundred years the Marian doctrines of Coredemptrix and Mediatrix of All Graces have been consistently and universally taught in the Church by the Popes, Mariologists and by bishops. According to some of the Mariologists, the teaching of the Church on this doctrine already possesses the nature

⁸⁷⁸ St. Maximilian Kolbe, *Miles Immaculatae*, I, 1938, Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, p. 90, as cited in: Id.

⁸⁷⁹ St. Maximilian Kolbe, *Letter to Father Mikolajczyk*, 28 July 1935, Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, p. 99, as cited in: Miravalle, Mark I, Loc. cit., P. 55.

⁸⁸⁰ Cf., Miravalle, Mark I, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, op. cit., P. 55.

of defined doctrine of faith. Therefore the Christian faithful are called through this teaching of the Magisterium to understand and to accept the doctrine of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces unquestioningly, because the charism of the teaching authority of the Church is essentially infallible. And hence the task of theology is to make the Christian faithful to understand this teaching.⁸⁸¹

From our discussion on the doctrine of Mary as Mediatrix, we can put together the following key elements, which constitute the common view of Mary's mediation. They are:

*"1) Mary's mediation is in Christ, that is neither taking away from his unique mediation, nor independent of it (LG 60 and 62, RM 38); 2) it is maternal mediation (RM 38); 3) it is probably best understood in terms of participation (cf. LG 62, RM 39); 4) it extends to all of humanity (cf. RM 40); 5) it lies certainly in, but cannot be entirely restricted to, intercession (LG 62, RM 39); 6) Mary's mediation is singular, surpassing other mediations (RM 39); 7) it is mediation within, and not from above, the Church."*⁸⁸²

Considering all these inter-related truths, the following hypothetical statement about Mary's mediation can be made, which will help us to have an understanding of the doctrine.

*"By the divine decree Mary co-operated in the redemptive work of her Son as his Mother and associate. This co-operation, which includes mediation, is to be understood as participation, thus adding nothing to the merits of her Son. Mary continues her maternal mediation through her love and intercession. All grace is given with Mary as a secondary exemplary cause, so that humanity may enter into her ecclesial 'yes' to God's saving plan."*⁸⁸³

In no way can we deny the fact that it was God's will to bring Mary into a close relationship with the saving work of her divine Son, Jesus Christ. She co-operated in the work of Redemption as Mother of God, Generous Associate and as Handmaid of the Lord. This is a very clear teaching of the Vatican II:

"Predestined from eternity by that decree of divine providence which determined the incarnation of the Word to be the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin was on this earth the virgin Mother of the

⁸⁸¹ Cf., Miravalle, Mark, *Introduction to Mary*, op. cit., Pp. 110-111.

⁸⁸² O'Donnell, Christopher, *Mediatrix of Graces: Continuing Questions*, in: *Milltown Studies*, No. 22, Autumn, 1988, Pp. 103-104.

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*, P. 104.

Redeemer, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord.”⁸⁸⁴

This co-operation of Mary in the teaching of the Church is understood as “participation”. The classical exposition of this notion is presented by St. Thomas in a mature form.⁸⁸⁵ Christopher O’Donnell explains the teaching of St. Thomas in the following manner:

*“Participation is concerned with the old problem of the One and the Many. The one who is perfect is the cause of the participated good, and the latter is completely subjected to the former. Mary’s mediation can in no way be independent of that of Jesus; she can only serve it. Whatever Mary does is, in fact, the mediation of her Son and she can in no sense be seen as the cause of his mediation. Is her participated mediation then necessary? The reply to this question can only be an appeal to the divine plan which wills that Mary have such a sharing in the work of her Son. The same question can be asked about the two examples of participation given by the Council, that is, the universe participating in the divine goodness, and the participation by various people in the one priesthood of Christ. We can only reply that God willed these participations. One can finally ask about the mode of Mary’s participation. At one level she co-operates perfectly in her own persona she allows the fruits of the redemption to be fully and most perfectly operative in her life. From this full personal acceptance of the gift of redemption, she enters into the divine plan that wishes that all people enjoy the fruits of her Son’s work.”*⁸⁸⁶

Though the mediation of Mary is participation in the redemptive work of her Son, she remains always on the side of the humanity, through the intercessory role of her mediation. Her maternal mediation cares for the whole human family. Mary, being one with her Son, intercedes for the entire human race, even for those who do

⁸⁸⁴ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 61, in: op. cit.

⁸⁸⁵ Cf., Id., P. 105.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid., Pp. 105-106, ; Cf., Lect 2. On thomistic participation see C. Fabro, ‘Participation’ in NCE 10: 1042-1046 and the classical works: idem, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tomaso d’Aquino* (Turin: Soc. Ed. Internazionale, 1964³); L. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1942), ; Cf., *Summa theologiae* Ia, q.96, a.1c – ‘omne autem quod est per participationem subditur ei quod est per essentiam et universaliter’; *Summa C.G.* 1:32 – ‘Omne quod participatur determinatur ad modum participati, et sic partialiter habetur ei non secundum omnem perfectionis modum’. See important study, H. Chevannes ‘The Mediation of Mary and the Doctrine of Participation’, *Ephemerides mariologicae* 24 (1974) 48-56 with responses in subsequent issues of that Journal and the author’s own reply to critiques 26 (1976) 135-141, ; Cf., ST 3a, q.26, a.1 - others can in some sense (*secundum quid*) can be called mediators; their role is co-operation *dispositive vel ministerialiter*. See too L.B. Geiger, ‘Quelque remarques au texts de Mr. H. Chavannes’ *Ephemerides mariologicae* 24 (1974) 383-387 at 386 – ‘La médiation de Marie manifeste (*ostendit*) l’unique médiation du Christ. Elle ne s’y ajoute donc pas, encore moins est-elle indépendante. Ni addition, ni conflit, et cependant la médiation de Marie est réelle, comprise, en quelque sorte dans l’unique médiation du Christ.’ The suggestion of synergy by Alonso, art. Cit. (n. 21) 46-48 would seem to assert too much about the specifically participated mediation of Mary. (Footnote, Nos. 32-34, in: Ibid., Pp. 109-110.)

not know her, asking that the effects of his redemption be applied to the entire humanity. Mary's intercession has a universal character and nobody is left out of her maternal intercession.⁸⁸⁷ The role of intercession of Mary to Jesus is known as *ascending* mediation, i.e. from the human family to God, and her direct and active role in the distribution of all the graces of salvation is known as *descending* mediation i.e. from God to us.⁸⁸⁸ Speaking on the role of Mary in the descending order,

*"We can find a way of speaking about Mary being involved in the distribution of all graces if we examine her role from the point of view of exemplary causality. Mary is the realized Image of the Church: she is its permanent model (RM 42). Mary as Mediatrix stands not above the Church but within it. We can therefore say that all grace is given to develop the Marian characteristics of the Church. She may thus be seen as a secondary exemplary cause."*⁸⁸⁹

Thus we see that truths contained in the mediation of Mary are not very easy to understand. And hence there remains a pastoral challenge in the usage of the language when speaking about mediation to the common Christian faithful to make them understand the truths about the mediation of Mary, without giving any room for misunderstandings. However difficult it is to understand the doctrine of the mediation of Mary, through the acceptance of this doctrine we are allowing ourselves to be more fully inserted into the family plan of God.⁸⁹⁰

Mary's role in the mediation both in the ascending and in the descending order is established by God. This role of Mary in mediation is a very essential element in consecration, because she is the most consecrated woman of our race. And hence let us now discuss about the role of Mary in our consecrations.

V.15. The Role of Mary in our Consecrations

At the very outset of our discussion we should recall certain fundamental truths about Mary before we really go deeper into our topic. Mary is not the Creator; she is a creature like us; she does not communicate divine life to us; only God can communicate His sanctifying grace to us; Mary never substituted herself for God rather she referred everything back to God. Through her *Fiat*, Mary showed her

⁸⁸⁷ Cf., O'Donnell, Christopher, *Mediatrix of Graces: Continuing Questions*, op. cit., P. 106.

⁸⁸⁸ Cf., Appollonio, Alessandro, M., *Mary Mediatrix of all Graces*, op. cit., P. 416.

⁸⁸⁹ Id., P. 107.

⁸⁹⁰ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 104, 107.

human solidarity to God in a humble way. As a humble woman she gave human birth to Christ at a given moment in the course of human history. God realized in Mary the most perfect interpersonal relationship between God and man. This human link, which was fashioned by God, out of Mary, was personal in the highest degree because it was maternal. Maternity is the most intimate relationship that exists and it constitutes the foundational and formational relationship of every human being. At the scene of Annunciation, a privileged and a primordial relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit came into existence, which turned out to be the foundation of salvation. The Holy Spirit formed Mary as his masterpiece in his own image. It was the Holy Spirit that formed Mary as a woman and as a Mother and effected in her the most perfect possible consecration (divinization) that ever occurred in any creature. She was the first living and personal dwelling place of the Son of God made man and she was the first living and personal temple of the Holy Spirit. All this gives us the reason that consecrations can be made only to God and the role of Mary in our consecration is quite different from that of God.⁸⁹¹

V.15.1. The Joint Role of Holy Spirit and Mary in Our Consecrations

Mary enjoys the most intimate union with the Holy Spirit and manifests visibly the invisible fecundity of the Spirit. She is both the temple and the perfect icon of the Holy Spirit. She shares the *con-naturality of grace* with the Holy Spirit. We have already discussed that it is the Holy Spirit who is the divine sanctifier and the one who distributes the fruits and graces of the Redemption through Mary. In every consecration it is the Holy Spirit who divinizes us, at the same time the Holy Spirit involves Mary and causes her to participate in the well-known gifts of the Holy Spirit. The initial consecration, which was realized in the person of Mary at the beginning of her existence in the plan of salvation is prolonged and extended in every consecration. The Spirit continues to give us everything that he gave to Mary at the time of Incarnation, Nativity, Redemption and finally at Pentecost so that Christ may be born continually in each Christian who consecrates himself/herself and also may be born in the world. This new birth is nothing but our birth in Christ and the rebirth of Christ in us. The Holy Spirit helps us identify with Christ from within, according to our own vocation and our own specific gifts. Therefore we can say that everything that we entrust to Mary through the act of consecration is sanctified by

⁸⁹¹ Cf., Laurentin, René, *The Meaning of Consecration today*, op. cit., Pp. 144-149.

the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who cleanses and purifies us from within. Holy Spirit is the one who not only unites us to God but also is the one who transfigures us, consecrates us and divinizes us. Just as the Holy Spirit awakened in Mary all her potentialities as a woman and as a mother and everything that were specific to Mary, so also he awakens in us and inspires us to do the best in us and to become more and more what we are, namely the image and likeness of God. The Holy Spirit is at work wherever Mary is. The Holy Spirit continues the work of grace, that was begun in Mary, in the life of the faithful, who entrusts himself to Mary. Just as the Holy Spirit realized the grace in Mary in a perfect manner so also the Holy Spirit will realize the graces in the life of everyone who unites himself to Mary through the act of consecration.⁸⁹²

V.15.2. Mary, the All-Powerful Suppliant

“Behold your Mother; behold your son”, through these words Jesus recognized and consecrated the role of Mary at the foot of the cross. With His words he consecrated Mary and entrusted the ultimate mission, namely, her *spiritual maternity*. Mary became our spiritual Mother as a result of the pain she underwent together with her divine Son on Calvary. Mary’s call to be the mother of the human family was already attained at the moment when she became the Mother of Christ. But a long period of maturation was required. She had to undergo the pain of separation from her Son during His public ministry and finally the pain of death of her Son on Calvary. All these were like the pains of childbirth. These pains of childbirth had won her the consecration as the Mother of the entire human family. Mary offered her divine Son on Calvary and lost Him but she received other children through her spiritual motherhood. Though Mary is not the Mother of Christ and our Mother exactly in the same way, she loves us with the same love with which she loves Christ. For Mary each child is unique and therefore her love is unique in the case of each one of us. Through this vocation as Mother of the human family, Mary continues to aid, assist and protect us. Mary through her perfect union with her Son is also perfectly united with the intentions of God and therefore implores what is best for us. Her maternal mission provides her with the means to help us, guide us and to sustain us. Mary through the role of spiritual motherhood receives a mysterious and powerful grace to inspire us and dispose us to receive the divine consecration, which

⁸⁹² Cf., *Ibid.*, Pp. 148, 152-153, 164.

comes from God alone. The union between Mary and her divine Son is so perfect both in heaven and on earth that they can say to each other, “*All that is mine is yours and all that is yours is mine*”. Jesus who shared the poverty, pain and humility of Mary shares with her His divine power. She possesses the divine power by association and perfect love and always in her humility as a creature. Therefore whatever her Son desires, she desires along with Him and whatever He gives, she gives along with Him and it is for this reason that she is seen as the “*All-Powerful Suppliant*”. She has received from God all the means she requires in order to carry out her mission as Mother. Therefore she is the best of mothers as far as we are concerned and as far as the Son of God is concerned. The same Lord who established with her the most perfect communion possible has also invited us to confide ourselves to her and to abandon ourselves to her without any reservation. All these point to the fact that we have the most possible reasons to make a place for Mary in our consecrations.⁸⁹³ Through her intercessions and through her maternal action, Mary promotes our consecration, which enables us to receive the gift of God that comes to us in consecration.⁸⁹⁴

V.16. Conclusion

Mary is the most precious gift of God to humanity. She took up the mission to be the Mother of the entire human family with all her heart and with all her love in view of the consecration of the whole world and of each individual person in this world. Mary is in God and with God in her capacity as a loving Mother. The love of God is unceasingly present in our life through the love of Mary. She loves us and she wants our love in return. We show our love towards her by being conscious of her loving presence at all times and by giving ourselves entirely to her through the Act of Consecration. In this filial act towards Mary we need to recognize the place God has given to Mary so that we may not discredit her unique role in our consecrations. Thus through her unique role which has been assigned by God Himself, Mary’s presence becomes formative in our life. But her presence is not the presence of God. It is God alone who created us, who sustains us and who divinizes us from within. Since Mary is closely united with God, nothing of what is addressed to God including consecration is apart from her. Mary shares everything with God through

⁸⁹³ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 159-164, 168.

⁸⁹⁴ Cf., Ibid., P. 143.

her close union with Him and therefore consecrations addressed in whatever manner to God can be taken to apply also to her. Being aware of the fact that God himself placed Mary at the mystery of our salvation and based on the understanding of the things that God has confided to her care in a special way, we can confide to her all that we are and everything what belongs to our individual personal life, just as the divine Word confided himself to her in order to be able to receive his human life. We confide and abandon ourselves to Mary in order to be consecrated to God because God alone can realize in us a consecration for eternal life. Once we confide everything to her, Mary intercedes for us and disposes us for our consecration. She helps us to accede to it and to respond to it in accordance with her role as a Mother. She as a mother begins to take care of the transitions of our lives, watches over the spiritual dark nights of our soul, and through her powerful intercession she gains for us the graces to live our everyday life in accordance to God's will. But above all when we are crushed by the burden of our life's cross, she provides us the necessary love, confidence, peace and hope and stands by us until the hour of our death, just as she accompanied her divine Son until the foot of the cross. Thus every act of consecration to Mary only leads us to the richness of God, which God Himself has stored in the Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁸⁹⁵

God is love and our consecration is His call to us to love, which can be a gift only from God alone. If it is so then *to consecrate oneself* would really mean our response and development of the gift that God has given. But our response to God in consecration of oneself needs purification, a healing of sin and an overcoming of disorder. Therefore God consecrated His own humanity in order to consecrate us so that we might become the members of the mystical body. But this consecration of Jesus the God-man involves a truly human solidarity of love between a mother and a son. Mother Mary was consecrated by God for this task and therefore she plays an irreplaceable and indispensable role in the fundamental consecration of her Son. Her role is both fundamental and foundational. She remained in communion with her Son and co-operated with Him from Annunciation to Assumption. Her role is far away from marginal and therefore she cannot be sidelined in the Act of Consecration. If God communicates His love through divine life, then Mary participates through her union with Him in every work of love. And hence she is very much present in every consecration. It is Mary who helps us in a radical way to be disposed to receive

⁸⁹⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 165-167, 202-203.

consecration, which is the supernatural gift of God. Our role in our consecration is to open up to accept the great design of love to which God calls us in freedom. That is the reason why God gave us a heart to love Him to the extent that is possible for us. Therefore consecration is nothing but: *love for love*.⁸⁹⁶

The Marian Consecration in Schoenstatt's spirituality is centered on this notion of mutual love between God through Mary and the faithful, and from the faithful to God through Mary. The notion of mutual love, which is the hallmark of Schönstatt spirituality, is based on the characteristic features of the Covenant in the Scriptures and hence it is called the "*Covenant of Love*". Let us now proceed to examine the significance and the uniqueness of the spirituality of Covenant of Love.

⁸⁹⁶ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 203-207.

VI. The originality and uniqueness of the spirituality of Covenant of Love

VI.1. Introduction

Schönstatt is a German word, which means a “*beautiful place*”. The earliest reference to this was: “*eyne schoene statt*” (a beautiful place), which is found in the historical document from the year 1143. This beautiful place is a little valley situated in Vallendar, a small village about 6 km north of Koblenz, in the Rhine region of west-central Germany. The Schönstatt Movement derives its name from the place of its origin. Schönstatt is a *movement of renewal* in the Catholic Church, which aims to renew the Church and the world by striving to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the example and guidance of Mary. It pursues to connect faith with daily life, through a deep love of Mary. From the very beginning of its origin, Schönstatt is inseparable from its unique relationship with Mary. It is deeply and devotedly Marian and hence it is readily identified as a *Marian Movement*, marked by an outstanding apostolic spirit and a great love for Mary.

The Pallottine priest, Fr. Joseph Kentenich (1885-1968), one of the great Marian figures of the 20th century, is the founder of the Schönstatt Movement. This Movement did not come into existence as a result of some extraordinary apparitions rather it emerged as a movement of self-education under the protection of Mary. The roots of the Schönstatt Movement date back to *October 18, 1914*. It was on this day that the young sodality of the Pallottine seminary together with their spiritual Father, Fr. Joseph Kentenich made their *Covenant of Love* with Mary in the old St. Michael’s Chapel, a small cemetery chapel in Schönstatt, Germany, which was later called as the *Original Shrine*. This was the beginning and the lasting foundation of today’s worldwide Schönstatt Movement. The consecration to Our Lady, the Mother Thrice Admirable in Schönstatt is called the *Covenant of Love*. It is a mutual promise and exchange of hearts between us, the earthly partners and the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schönstatt. The covenantal character marks the unique nature of this spirituality because of its solid foundation on the theology of the covenant. The

Covenant of Love is the heart, the source, the essence and strength of Schönstatt's spirituality.⁸⁹⁷ It can be concretely expressed as follows:

*"The Covenant of Love with Mary is Schönstatt's original form for living the baptismal covenant. It expresses and safeguards our covenant with the Blessed Trinity. Understood in this way, it is "the source of vitality and the centre of Schönstatt's spirituality," the heart of Schönstatt."*⁸⁹⁸

The *Covenant of Love* upon which Schönstatt was founded was an act of invitation: the earthly partners, namely, the founding generation of boys together with their spiritual director, Fr. Joseph Kentenich, consecrated themselves to Mary. In this act of consecration the boys promised Mary their best efforts for sanctity and asked her to use each of them as instruments and the heavenly partner (Mary) was invited to come down to dwell in the shrine as their mother and educator. This act of consecration to Mary turned the place-Schönstatt into a place of grace and over the years this place became a world centre for the international Schönstatt Movement. The existence of the shrine depends entirely on this *Covenant of Love* and every *Covenant of Love* with the MTA (Mother Thrice Admirable) is therefore connected to the Shrine. The Schönstatt Shrine, which is dedicated to Mary under the title Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schönstatt, serves as the spiritual home and centre of life for the entire Schönstatt movement. Therefore we can say that the spirituality of Schönstatt is anchored in the *mutual Covenant of Love* with the MTA in the Shrine.⁸⁹⁹ All those who seal this *Covenant of Love* with the Mother Thrice Admirable:

*"become effective instruments in the hands of Mary in order to collaborate with her in the religious-moral renewal of the world. Through this Covenant of Love, Schönstatt fulfills its commitment to construct history in childlike dependence and contact, freely and totally for Christ, the Lord of History through Mary, His permanent Collaborator."*⁹⁰⁰

Therefore the mission of the Schönstatt Movement can be formulated in the following manner:

⁸⁹⁷ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, Schönstatt Fathers, Waukesha WI, 2003², Pp. 5, 8, & 119.

⁸⁹⁸ *The Covenant of Love*, in: <http://www.schoenstatt.org/en/about-schoenstatt/the-covenant-of-love.htm>, 18.08.13.

⁸⁹⁹ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 36.

⁹⁰⁰ Id.

*“As a chosen work and instrument in the hands of Mary, we wish to work totally and untiringly for the Marian transformation of the world in Christ from Schönstatt.”*⁹⁰¹

The above description of the mission of Schönstatt Movement clearly points out to the one underlying fact that the *Covenant of Love with the MTA* is the source of Schönstatt’s mission.⁹⁰²

Fr. Joseph Kentenich had an unshakeable faith in the power and strength of this act of consecration to Mary and it was his strong belief that Mary educates and transforms the hearts of the persons who seal this Covenant of Love, so that they become modern day Apostles. His strong belief in the power of the Covenant of Love is echoed very clearly in the basic prayer book of the Schönstatt Family called *“Heavenwards”*,⁹⁰³ which was written by Fr. Joseph Kentenich in the concentration camp in Dachau in 1942. Some passages on the Covenant of Love are here as follows:

*“Even in Storms and dangers you will always remain faithful to the covenant you have sealed with us and enriched with countless graces.”*⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰¹ Id., P. 21.

⁹⁰² Cf., Ibid.

⁹⁰³ The first edition of this book was published in September 1945 as a manuscript for the internal use of the Schönstatt family, with the title “Himmelwärts”. Heavenwards is a prayer book rooted in the Schönstatt spirituality, including the Covenant of Love with Mary, and has a unique historical background, namely the trial by fire of Nazi persecution and the concentration camp in Dachau. Fr. Kentenich was arrested and sent to the concentration camp. He arrived at the concentration camp on March 13, 1942. The difficulties did not lead to despair, however. Rather, a new and deepening spirit of being an instrument in the hands of God the Father began to develop. Father Kentenich survived the brutal and inhuman conditions of the concentration camp in Dachau for over three years (he was released on April 6, 1945), but at the same time he also initiated an active apostolate among his fellow prisoners, especially among the priests. It was at their urging that he began to express the spirit of Dachau in prayers. In the diabolical atmosphere of Dachau a rich spiritual life grew up and the prayers were a way to foster the awareness of God’s guiding hand. By the end of World War II it was clear that the Dachau prayers were an expression not only of the spirit of Dachau but also of the spirit of Schönstatt. Father Kentenich later called them a “summary of the Founding Documents in prayer form”, for they contain the central elements of Schönstatt’s spirituality: the Covenant of Love, practical faith in Divine Providence, the personal ideal, mission consciousness, everyday sanctity, and more. Especially evident was the specific flavor of the “Blank Check” and the “Inscriptio”, especially focused on the willingness to be completely used as an instrument by God the Father, even when it means cross and suffering. In the fall of 1945, Father Kentenich published this collection of prayers under the title *“Heavenwards”*. His motivation for publication became clear when he introduced the book to the Schönstatt Family at the Dankeswoche (Thanksgiving Week) in October 1945. He spoke of the “victorious inner attitude” which had carried Schönstatt through the Nazi years, most visible in the Inscriptio and in the Dachau prayers. (See: Kentenich, Joseph, *Heavenwards: Prayers for the use of the Schönstatt Family*, (translated by Jonathan Niehaus), Jonathan Niehaus and the Schönstatt Fathers, Waukesha, 1992, Pp. 1-3.).

⁹⁰⁴ Kentenich, Joseph, *Heavenwards: Prayers for the use of the Schönstatt Family*, Schönstatt Movement of England and Wales registered Charity, 1993, P. 16, (my emphasis). (From now on this reference will be mentioned as *Heavenwards*). The original version is:

*“We want to mirror ourselves in your image and seal our **covenant of love** anew. Make us, your instruments, like you in everything and through us build Schoenstatt everywhere.”⁹⁰⁵*

*“Mother, inscribe us in your heart and lead us with you heavenwards. We loyally renew the **covenant** which we sealed in that hour of grace.”⁹⁰⁶*

*“You will bring them all victoriously home to the Father so that they can sing hymns to the Lamb. I firmly believe that none will be lost who remain faithful to their **covenant of love**.”⁹⁰⁷*

These passages of Heavenwards manifest the uniqueness and the originality of the spirituality of the Covenant of Love. The Covenant of Love opens the way for the person to live a living, loving, vibrant and permanent relationship with the God of our life and our history. The Covenant of Love underscores the fact that it is not just a means to express our intimate love for God but includes the concept of being completely at the disposal of God, so that God can work through us for others. A strong sense of mission emerges from the Covenant of Love, namely a mission to build the Kingdom of God.⁹⁰⁸ The faithful, by devoting themselves to Our Lady, try to discover the strength of God’s grace, to examine their own life in the light of faith and they get the strength to commit themselves to build God’s Kingdom in this secular world. Fr. Kentenich firmly believed in the effectiveness of the Covenant of Love in building up God’s kingdom and hence he expressed his ardent desire to the Schönstatt Family to proclaim the message of Covenant of Love to the whole world. He expressed it in the following manner:

*Dem **Bund**, den du mit uns geschlossen,
den du mit Gnaden reich begossen,
wirst du die Treue stets bewahren
in Stürmen auch und in Gefahren.* (Kentenich, Joseph, *Himmelwärts: Gebete für den Gebrauch in der Schönstattfamilie*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 1996, P. 15, (my emphasis). (From now on this reference will be mentioned as *Himmelwärts*).

⁹⁰⁵ Kentenich, Joseph, *Heavenwards*, P. 55. (My emphasis) The original version is:

*Wir wollen uns in deinem Bilde spiegeln
Und unser **Liebesbündnis** neu besiegeln.
Mach uns, dein Werkzeug, dir in allem gleich,
bau überall durch uns dein Schönstattreich.* (Kentenich, Joseph, *Himmelwärts*, P. 47.) (My emphasis)

⁹⁰⁶ Kentenich, Joseph, *Heavenwards*, P. 137. (My emphasis) The original version is:

*Mutter, schreib uns in dein Herz,
führ uns mit dir himmelwärts.*

*Wir erneuern treu den **Bund**,*

den wir schlossen einst zur Stund’. (Kentenich, Joseph, *Himmelwärts*, P. 106.) (My emphasis)

⁹⁰⁷ Kentenich, Joseph, *Heavenwards*, P. 182. (My emphasis) The original version is:

*Du wirst sie alle siegreich heimwärts bringen
Zum Vater, dass dem Lamm sie Lieder singen.
Ich glaube fest, dass nie zugrunde geht,*

*wer treu zu seinem **Liebesbündnis** steht.* (Kentenich, Joseph, *Himmelwärts*, P. 139.) (My emphasis)

⁹⁰⁸ Cf., *The Covenant of Love*, op.cit.

*“Schönstatt’s message is to lead the world once again into a deeply grasping covenant with our Blessed Mother, so that the covenant of love with the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit becomes and remains deep, unbreakable, never to be lost.... The loss of heart and meaning within our world will be overcome when we are convinced that our loving God entered into a covenant of love with His creation. ...God’s covenant of love! It is our task to make the world aware of this covenant of love. This we can do when we bring the world once again into a covenant of love with the Blessed Mother.”*⁹⁰⁹

This original spirituality of Schönstatt emerged fifty years before the Second Vatican Council. But this spirituality has from the time of its origin always remained directed towards the present-day needs of the Church and undoubtedly to the needs of the Church of the future too, emphasizing the various aspects of our Christian Faith. This spirituality is indeed an original contribution to the life of the Church. In this chapter let us deeply analyze the various aspects of this Covenant of Love as understood by Fr. Kentenich and its originality and uniqueness, which lies in the covenantal character of the consecration. This is possible only when we first understand the role of Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich and her unique mission in our time.

VI.2. Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich⁹¹⁰

Mary played a very vital and a key role in the life of Fr. Kentenich since his childhood. The hallmark of Charles de Foucauld is *poverty*, for St. Theresa the Little Flower it is the *attitude of childlikeness*, for the Carthusians and Trappists it is

⁹⁰⁹ Fr. Kentenich, 1946, as cited in: *In the Covenant of Love*, in: http://www.schoenstatt-familien.de/en/spiritualitaet/im_bund_der_liebe.php, 18.08.13.

⁹¹⁰ Fr. Kentenich was born in Gymnich, near Cologne, on November 16, 1885 and was christened Peter Josef Kentenich the next day at the Parish Church of St. Kunibert. From the age of nine he grew up with a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary, who accompanied him through his life’s many trials. In 1904 he joined the Pallottine Fathers as a novice and was ordained a priest of this community on July 8, 1910. In 1912 he was appointed spiritual director of the Pallottine Minor Seminary in Schönstatt, Germany. In 1919 the Pallottines allowed Fr. Kentenich to begin working full-time for what came to be known as the Schönstatt Movement. The Schönstatt Movement began to spread to other parts of Germany. His work expanded rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s. But it suffered in the hands of the Nazis in the time Hitler controlled Germany, and Fr. Kentenich was a prisoner of the Nazis for 3½ years, primarily in the Dachau Concentration Camp. He survived Dachau to begin a new phase of international expansion and growth for the Movement. He and his work were tested by the Church, leading to a time of exile from Europe (1951-65) before his full reinstatement under Pope Paul VI. His final years (1965-1968) were spent guiding the already vast and international movement. He died on September 15, 1968 in Schönstatt, Germany, where he is buried. His cause for beatification was opened by the Church in 1975. (Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich: A life for the Church*, Schoenstatt Publications, 1985, P. 12, ; Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., Pp. 8-9.)

solitude and prayer and for Fr. Kentenich it is the *emphasis on the Marian reality*. Everything for him is bound up with, expressed in, or read from the Marian reality. There is scarcely anyone else for whom everything really depends on Mary.⁹¹¹ Fr. Kentenich says that he has always seen it to be his task in life to accept, realize, and proclaim the place of Mary in the order of salvation.⁹¹² He further says that the most unique thing which can and which must set us, the Schönstatters, apart from other points of view is the strong Marian imprint on the otherworldly, the supernatural order. The way we see the Mother of God is for us a matter of survival.⁹¹³ Fr. Kentenich saw in the Marian substance which he observed and experienced in himself and others, the fundamental approach for his activity. Certainly there were many things where he connected, expanded, compared with other opinions and life streams, sought the help of theology, and waited for confirmations. But in a very primary way we are dealing with a charismatic original process. In spite of all the influences which Fr. Kentenich adopted, in spite of all the commonality with related groups, he ultimately stands alone because from the very start in Schönstatt the entire order of salvation has been seen by him in a Marian light, which was indeed in a way that was then, to the best of his knowledge, practically unknown.⁹¹⁴

Fr. Kentenich, while speaking about the inner union and identity between the history of his soul and the history of the Family, points out to two proofs, which show the place of Mary in his life right from his childhood. The first proof is a short prayer, which has developed slowly within him right from his early childhood days and which was expressed by him in Latin form in the later stage of his life⁹¹⁵ as follows:

⁹¹¹ Cf., King, Herbert, *Die Erfahrung des Marianischen: Der Beitrag Schönstatts zum Weg mit Maria*, in: REGNUM 22, II, 1988, P. 56.

⁹¹² Cf., Ibid. The original text is: “*So habe ich immer meine Lebensaufgabe darin erblickt - und zwar als eine wirkliche Lebensaufgabe-, die Stellung der Gottesmutter in der Heilsordnung zu bejahen, zu verwirklichen und zu künden*” (1963). (Because many of Fr. Kentenich’s writings are not yet published, we will only cite them by the year in which Fr. Kentenich made the statement - Herbert King).

⁹¹³ Cf., Ibid. The original text is: “*Das Originellste, was uns Schönstätter ganz allgemein unterscheiden kann - vielleicht auch muß - von den anderen Auffassungen, ist diese starke marianische Prägung der jenseitigen, der übernatürlichen Ordnung. Es ist eine Existenzfrage für uns, wie wir die Gottesmutter sehen*” (1963).

⁹¹⁴ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 59-60.

⁹¹⁵ Cf., Kentenich, Josef, *With Mary into the New Millennium: Selected Texts about the Mission of the Blessed Mother*, translated by: M. Jane Hoehne, Waukesha WI, nd, P. 156, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *With Mary into the New Millennium*).

*“Ave, Maria, puritatis tuae causa custodi animam meam et corpus meum, aperi mihi cor tuum et cor Filii tui; da mihi animas et cetera tolle tibi.”*⁹¹⁶

This short prayer of petition by Fr. Kentenich points out not only his attachment to Mary but also expresses a deep love towards the heart of Mary and towards the heart of Jesus, her Son. His love towards the holy hearts found its ultimate expression in the remembrance card which was given out in honor of his ordination in 1910: *“Heart of Jesus, I trust in you! Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!”*⁹¹⁷ But above all in this prayer, the fundamental root for the entire spirituality of the family can be easily identified.⁹¹⁸

The second proof which manifests the place of Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich is a consecration to Mary when he was nine years old. It influenced his life profoundly. A drastic incident took place in the life of Fr. Kentenich, when he was in his ninth year. The adverse family circumstances forced his mother Katharina to take a decision to place him in an orphanage, at the advice of her confessor, Fr. August Savels. He had founded St. Vincent’s Orphanage in 1882 in Oberhausen, Germany and he offered Katharina a place for Joseph in this orphanage. On April 12, 1894 Katharina brought the young Joseph Kentenich to St. Vincent’s Orphanage. It was a complete change in his life, because his sense of belonging and security, which was firmly grounded in the interconnectedness of his village, was replaced by a strange educational institution in an unfamiliar large industrial city.⁹¹⁹ Joseph’s mother took him to the house Chapel before saying goodbye to him. There was a statue of Mary with St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena in this chapel. The mother of Joseph in her distress turned to the statue of Mary and consecrated him to Mary by hanging her first communion chain around the neck of this statue. She entrusted him to Mary by praying loud: *“Educate my child! Be entirely his mother!”* This religious experience was a key experience in the life of Fr. Kentenich, which had a lasting and deep impact on his soul and in his entire life.⁹²⁰ This consecration had a unique character because the entire Schönstatt work is embryonically

⁹¹⁶ Ibid. It means: *Hail Mary, for the sake of your purity keep me pure in body and soul. Open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son. Give me souls and keep all else for yourself.*

⁹¹⁷ Cf. Schlickmann, Dorothea, M., *The Hidden Years: Father Joseph Kentenich, Childhood and Youth (1885-1910)*, translated by: Mary Jane Hoehne, Schoenstatt-Verlag, 2009, P. 271.

⁹¹⁸ Cf., *With Mary into the New Millennium*, Loc. cit.

⁹¹⁹ Cf., Id., Pp. 90-91.

⁹²⁰ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 106-107, ; Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life: The Founding of Schönstatt (1912-1919)*, Schoenstatt Fathers, 2003², P. 22, ; Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich: A life for the Church*, Schoenstatt Publications, 1985, P. 17.

comprised in this consecration.⁹²¹ Fr. Kentenich in a talk in May 1914, made an autobiographical reference to this consecration by saying the following:

*“Several years ago I saw a statue of the Blessed Mother in an orphanage with a gold-plated chain and cross around her neck. Chain and cross were the remembrance of the first communion of a mother whom unfavorable circumstances forced to give up her only child to an orphanage. She herself could no longer be the mother of her child. What could she do in her heartrending fear and need? She went, took the one precious remembrance of her childhood – her first communion chain – and hung it around the neck of the Mother of God with the beseeching plea: Educate my child! Be entirely his Mother! Fulfill for me my duties as mother! Today this child is a zealous priest who works many blessings to the glory of God and his heavenly Mother.”*⁹²²

Fr. Kentenich himself considers this consecration to Mary at the age of nine as the Covenant of Love with Mary in his heart, which was a profound experience for him and he had kept it as secret until October 18, 1914. The consecration to Mary in his life at the age of nine was indeed seen by him as the intervention of Divine Providence into his life to prepare the future of the Schönstatt Work through Mary.⁹²³ He explains this in later years in the following manner:

*“I do not yet want to lift the veil from this event. If we are to speak of a consecration to Mary, we have to add that it has a character all its own. Historians will later be able to show quite easily that in fact the whole of Schönstatt Work was already germinally present in it.”*⁹²⁴

Fr. Kentenich not only sees the consecration to Mary at the age of nine as a divine intervention, but also affirms that it was founded in a mystery of God, and this

⁹²¹ Cf., *With Mary into the New Millennium*, op. cit., P. 156.

⁹²² Kentenich, Joseph, *Talk of May 3, 1914*, in: Kastner, Ferdinand, *Unter dem Schutze Mariens: Untersuchungen und Dokumente aus der Frühzeit Schönstatts 1912-1914*, Ferdinand Schöningh, 1939, Pp. 229-230, as cited in: Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, Loc. cit. The original text is: *Vor mehreren Jahren sah ich in einer Waisenhauskapelle eine Muttergottesstatue mit einer vergoldeten Kette und einem Kreuz um den Hals. Kette und Kreuz war das Kommunionandenken einer Mutter, die infolge widriger Familienverhältnisse gezwungen war, ihr einziges Kind im Waisenhaus unterzubringen. Sie selbst konnte ihrem Kinde nicht mehr Mutter sein. Was soll sie nun in ihrer Herzensangst und Besorgnis tun? Sie geht hin, nimmt ihr einziges wertvolles Andenken aus der Kinderzeit — ihr Kommunionandenken — und hängt es der Muttergottes um den Hals mit der inständigen Bitte: Erziehe du mein Kind! Sei du ihm ganz Mutter! Erfülle du für mich die Mutterpflichten! Heute ist dieses Kind ein eifriger Priester und wirkt segensreich zur Ehre Gottes und seiner himmlischen Mutter.*

⁹²³ Cf., Schlickmann, Dorothea, M., *The Hidden Years*, op. cit., P. 110.

⁹²⁴ Kentenich, Joseph, *Zur Studie: Gründer und Gründung, März, 1955*, P. 3, (ASP), (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: *Ich möchte noch nicht den Schleier von diesem Ereignisse wegziehen. Wenn man es eine Marienweihe nennt, so muss man beifügen, es sei eine solche mit eigenartiger Prägung gewesen. Spätere Historiker werden leicht feststellen, dass tatsächlich darinnen das ganze Schönstattwerk bereits keimhaft grundgelegt worden ist.*

consecration was his own personal self-surrender to God. He confirms this in a talk in the following manner: “*My unreliability now rests in the most reliable hands imaginable, in the maternal hands of the Blessed Mother, and thus in the hands of God.*”⁹²⁵ He considered his consecration to Mary as a subjective experience and not as a mystical experience or as a vision. It was his belief that he was subjectively touched and affected by the reality of God’s singular personal love.⁹²⁶ Fr. Kentenich never separates the action of Mary from the action of God. She in fact symbolizes the presence of God in his life. He explains his experience of Mary inseparably linked with God in the following manner:⁹²⁷

*“I wanted to be dependent only and always on the Blessed Mother as much as possible. Of course, the Blessed Mother must always be seen here as a symbol of and in connection with Christ and the Triune God.”*⁹²⁸

Through this consecration to Mary, Joseph Kentenich received a supernatural experience from Mary, which turned out to be a fundamental experience for him and continued to accompany him since then.⁹²⁹

Another important phase of his life, which manifests the role of Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich, was his novitiate life. His novitiate life began on September 24, 1904 and lasted for two years. He was almost 20 years old at that time. Father Kentenich’s devotion to Mary and his love of Mary emerges during the novitiate as formative and determining. This was very clear in the two recollections of Father Kolb, the rector of the Limburg house.⁹³⁰

*“In May 1905, in order to get to know Our Lady better, the novice started making a collection: **Collectaneum: De beata Maria Virgine** (collection: On the blessed Virgin Mary). On the cover, in his own hand, are the Pallottine Initials A.I.D.G., A.S.A. and A. D. P.: **Ad infinitam Dei gloriam, Ad salvandas animas, Ad destruendum peccatum**: To the infinite glory of God, for the salvation of souls, for the destruction of sin. In the first case, however, he adds **et B.M.V.**, so that it reads: to the infinite glory of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Here we find 23 pages, mostly written in shorthand, of quotations copiously taken from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. To give only one example,*

⁹²⁵ Id., P. 111.

⁹²⁶ Cf., Ibid., P. 113.

⁹²⁷ Cf., Id.

⁹²⁸ J. Kentenich, Answer to *Gründer und Gründung*, 1955, p. 102. (ASM), as cited in: Ibid., P. 111.

⁹²⁹ Cf., Id., P. 113.

⁹³⁰ Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., Pp. 27-28.

*there is St Thomas Aquinas whom he respected his whole life long: **Maria est miraculorum compendium et summum ipsa miraculum**: Mary is a compendium of miracles and herself the greatest miracle; or **Dixit verbum, et omnia facta sunt,- dixit Maria, et verbum caro factum est**: He said the Word and all things were made; He said 'Mary' and the Word was made flesh.*"⁹³¹

Grignion de Montfort's 'True Devotion to Mary' and 'Mystery of Mary' and the 'Grignion Consecration' also influenced the life of the young novice Joseph to a great extent. The following points taken from an exposition by Father Bayer will help us to understand it clearly:⁹³²

"First point: what have we consecrated to Mary?

(1) The body with all its senses and members: eyes, ears, mouth, nose, hands, feet, the sense of touch; (2) The soul with its powers, i.e. understanding and will; (3) All our external goods; (4) All our interior goods, i.e. merits, virtues, good works. All this we have sold, pledged, consecrated and put at her disposal . . .'

*In the second point he asks: 'What does this mean, I have consecrated, sold, pledged, handed over myself completely and entirely to the dear Mother of God?' — and gives this answer: It follows that I must let myself 'be led totally by the Spirit of Mary'. "*⁹³³

For the first time Fr. Kentenich made a reference on the theme "*Mary's garden*" in his personal notes where he said: "*everyone who consecrates himself to Mary must strive to be like Mary, and this means making his heart into a 'garden of Mary'.*"⁹³⁴ This theme would play a very special role in the later life of Fr. Kentenich.

It is very clear and obvious from the above references that the seed of love for Mary, which was sown during his life in the orphanage, was definitely sprouting and growing in the heart of the young novice Joseph during his novitiate life. But his life during the novitiate was not a pleasant one. It was a life of crisis. In his letter to J. Fischer on December 11, 1916 he explains about his crisis in very clear terms:

"May I once unveil a little about my past? From the moment I entered the novitiate up to my ordination and even beyond that, I had to constantly endure the craziest fights. There was not the slightest trace of inner happiness and satisfaction. I was not

⁹³¹ Ibid., P. 28.

⁹³² Cf., Ibid., Pp. 28-29.

⁹³³ Ibid., P. 29.

⁹³⁴ Ibid.

understood by my spiritual director and along with my unhealthy rationalistic and skeptical thoughts I had a very little hold on the supernatural. That was the most tremendous internal and external, want to say mental and physical suffering."⁹³⁵

During these moments of crisis the young novice Joseph seemed to be well-adjusted to those around him. But inside he was experiencing isolation, loneliness and lack of human contact. It was caused by a spiritual distress which overcame him as a result of becoming acquainted with philosophical idealism and skepticism. This distress was the result of his deep quest to know abstract truth absolutely. He raised the question: "Does truth exist at all and how can it be perceived?" It was not just a rational problem for him but something which turned out to be an existential struggle. It was his 'fanaticism for truth'. In the later stage of his life he described this crisis as the flight of mind and soul from all that is "merely human." One can say that he experienced all the ill-effects of the overly rational approach typical of the intellectual and even religious formation of that time. He later summarized his errors as *exaggerated idealism or skepticism* (separation of idea from reality), *exaggerated individualism* (separation of individual from society and fellowman), and *exaggerated supranaturalism* (separation of the natural from the supernatural order). He later called this idealist and separatist mentality as 'mechanistic thinking'. Though he instinctively understood that these exaggerations were wrong, still he could not free himself from them and kept going in circles, hoping to gain some absolute truth. In fact there was a terrifying possibility of a mental breakdown.⁹³⁶ Fr. Kentenich makes an autobiographical statement about this crisis situation in a talk in the year 1955 in the following words:

"To put it succinctly, I would have to say that precisely because my mind and soul were alienated from all that is earthly, from all that is truly human, from all that is of this world, the whole of me was inwardly tortured and tossed to and fro by total skepticism, exaggerated idealism, destructive individualism and one-sided supranaturalism. I have usually said that the battles of my youth

⁹³⁵ Foot Note, No. 15, in: Kentenich, Joseph, *Das Lebensgeheimnis Schönstatts: I. Teil Geist und Form*, Patris Verlag, 1971, P. 187, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). (From now on this reference will be mentioned as LSch 1952, I). The original text is:

Darf ich einmal ein wenig den Schleier von meiner Vergangenheit lösen? Von meinem Eintritt ins Noviziat bis zu meiner Priesterweihe und noch etwas darüber hinaus hatte ich ständig die wahnsinnigsten Kämpfe zu bestehen. Von innerem Glück und Zufriedenheit nicht die geringste Spur. Wurde von meinem Seelenführer nicht verstanden und hatte bei meiner ungesunden rationalistisch-skeptischen Gedankenrichtung nur geringen übernatürlichen Halt. Das waren wahnsinnige innere und äußere, will sagen geistige und dazu noch körperliche Leiden.

⁹³⁶ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., P. 21, ; Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., Pp. 33-34.

*were battles of faith. Such a statement should be understood in very general terms. To be more precise, my struggle involved skepticism and all the other -isms, in particular idealism and individualism. During these years the essential question was: Is there truth, and if so how do we recognize it? The whole edifice of the faith was only indirectly drawn into this process. The individual truths of our faith as such were not in question, but rather the whole complex edifice of the teaching on supernature. Underlying this skepticism was an extremely strong love for the truth. This fanatical search for the truth became a driving force that determined everything I did. Even with regard to our professors, this inner passion for the truth often led me to overstep the bounds of tact. To put it another way, as a typical representative of people today, I was allowed to savour their mental anguish to the full. It is the anguish of a mechanistic mentality, which separates the idea from life (idealism), one person from another (individualism), and the supernatural from the natural order (supranaturalism)."*⁹³⁷

In his existential crisis, the young seminarian Joseph was unshakably united with just one person, namely, the Mother of God. The distress, which he suffered on account of the inner crisis, served to protect him from any merely human influence and to draw him completely into the influence of the Mother of God, as the exponent

⁹³⁷ Kentenich, Joseph, *Zur Studie: Gründer und Gründung*, März, 1955, P. 9, (ASP), (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: *Wenn ich sie auf einen Nenner zurückführen soll, so müßte ich wohl sagen: Gerade wegen der Lösung meines Geistes und meiner Seele vom Erdhaften, vom echt Menschlichen, vom Diesseitigen, wurde der ganze Mensch von einem totalen Skeptizismus, von einem überspitzten Idealismus, von einem zersetzenden Individualismus und von einem einseitigen Supranaturalismus innerlich zerquält und hin und her geworfen. Ich pflegte sonst wohl zu sagen, meine Jugendkämpfe seien Glaubenskämpfe gewesen. Das ist eine Aussage, die nur ganz allgemein gefaßt sein will. Formell drehte es sich schlechthin um Skeptizismus und all die andern Ismen in seinem Gefolge, vor allem um Idealismus und Individualismus. Das Kernstück war also in diesen Jahren: Gibt es überhaupt eine Wahrheit, und wie ist sie erkennbar? Indirekt wurde in diesen Vorgang auch das Glaubensgebäude hineingezogen. Es ging dabei nicht um einzelne Glaubenswahrheiten, sondern um den Gesamtkomplex des übernatürlichen Lehrgebäudes. Hinter diesem Skeptizismus steckte ein ungemein starker Drang zur Wahrheitsliebe. Dieser Wahrheitsfanatismus, wurde zu einer Triebkraft, die all mein Handeln näher bestimmte, die nicht selten auch im Verkehr mit Professoren aus innerer Wahrheitsnot heraus die Grenzen des Taktes überschritt. Anders ausgedrückt: Als Typ des modernen Menschen durfte ich dessen geistige Not reichlich auskosten. Es ist die Not einer mechanistischen Geistigkeit, die die Idee vom Leben (Idealismus), die die Person vom personalen Gegenüber (Individualismus) und das Übernatürliche von der natürlichen Ordnung trennt (Supranaturalismus). Comment on exaggerated idealism: Although philosophical idealism as such is not referred to, Fr Kentenich saw the affinity between his one-sided and exaggerated fixation on ideas as such - that is, in abstract and unrelated to actual life - and the philosophical school associated with Hegel. It is an expression of what he called mechanistic thinking, that is, an intellectual construct that resembles a machine in which parts can be removed and replaced at will. The machine continues to exist. Organic thinking, however, sees life as something whole. It is not possible to remove a part without affecting or even destroying the whole. There is an interplay and interrelation between all the elements that make up the whole.*

Comment on fanatical search for the truth: During a discussion with Fr Boll in Milwaukee, Fr Kentenich enlarged on what he called his fanaticism for the truth. He was searching for absolute truth, an absolute proof of truth, similar to scientific proof. He was so gripped with this need to discover absolute certainty about the truth that he was unable to "switch off", he was unable to divert his attention to something else. His questions, therefore, went far beyond the normal bounds of tact or good manners.

of God and the supernatural. Contact with her kept his soul in balance in spite of all inner turmoil. His firm reliance on her led to the solution of his conflict. He found his way out of the crisis by radically entrusting everything to Mary, the Mother of God. With all his disturbing questions he threw himself entirely into her arms anew in an act of total surrender with the readiness to suffer the slow draining away of the entire mind's powers if it should be God's will. Thus his inner struggle was not solved by means of intellectual clarity but by an existential decision. By renewing his total surrender to Mary he identified himself with her, adopting Mary's point of view. This helped him to proceed to clarify and distinguish apparently irreconcilable contradictions. Years later he gladly attributed to his heavenly Mother his entire formation, noting how in the depths of his soul no other person had been able to shape him at this stage in his life. The Mother of God cared for the young Joseph in a motherly way since the time when his mother placed him directly in Mary's care ("Be you now his Mother") in the orphanage in April 1894. The young Joseph took it literally, making this the moment of his personal Marian consecration. He discovered in a new way when he turned to her in 1909, how she bridged the great divide of the "-isms" in his soul, integrating idea and reality, being an individual and a part of society, nature and supernature. Fr. Kentenich experienced for the first time that the Mother of God is the point of intersection of this world and the beyond, of nature and supernature.⁹³⁸ Looking back at this inner struggle in later years Fr. Kentenich stated the role of Mary in his life in the following way:

*"That my soul halfway kept its equilibrium was due to [my] personal deep love of Mary. The experiences which I had at that time made it possible for me to later formulate the following statements: The Blessed Mother is simply the intersection point between the natural and supernatural... she is the world's equilibrium, that is, through her mission and being she holds the world in balance."*⁹³⁹

Fr. Kentenich was of the firm belief that God allowed him to grow up as far as possible untouched by and independent of prevailing intellectual currents and living persons. It was his strong conviction that heaven was taking great care to keep

⁹³⁸ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 21-22. ; Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., Pp. 34.35.

⁹³⁹ Kentenich, Joseph, *Zur Studie: Gründer und Gründung, März, 1955*, Pp. 9-10, (ASP), (translated by Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: *Die Seele wurde während dieser Jahre einigermaßen im Gleichgewicht gehalten durch eine persönliche, tiefe Marienliebe. Die während dieser Zeit gemachten erlebnismäßigen Erfahrungen ließen mich später die Sätze formulieren: Die Gottesmutter ist schlechthin der Schnittpunkt zwischen Diesseits und Jenseits, zwischen Natur und Übernatur... Sie ist die Waage der Welt. Will heißen, sie hält durch ihr Sein und ihre Sendung die Welt im Gleichgewicht.*

him away from the ordinary formative and educative influences. It was the Mother of God who had the main influence in his education right from his childhood days.⁹⁴⁰

He spoke about this in the later years in the following manner:

“(My) soul was meant to remain as untouched as possible by foreign influences, especially the influence of people, so that every fibre of my being might remain receptive to the actual teacher of my life, to her formative power and educational wisdom. By this I mean our Lady. She has played this part in my life not just in the recent or more distant past. I have been consciously aware of her presence in my spiritual life from this point of view since my very earliest years. It is difficult to lay down the exact point in time from which I have regarded and appreciated myself as her work and instrument. The process can be traced back to my early childhood.... On countless occasions in the past, therefore, I have seen myself as a hermit in a vast desert, while at the same time always in connection with the Mother of God as the great teacher of my inner and outer life.”⁹⁴¹

Fr. Kentenich on the occasion of the twenty-fifth jubilee of his priestly ordination on August 11, 1935 recalls this key experience in his life and affirms that Mary played a vital educational role in his life in the following manner:

“She (Mary) has personally formed and moulded me from my ninth year onwards.... When I look back, I can say that I know of no other person who has exercised a profounder influence on my development. Millions of people break down when they have to depend so much on themselves as I had to. I had to grow up in total inner loneliness and isolation, because a world had to be born in me that had later to be carried on and passed on to others. If my soul had contact with the culture of that time, if I had been personally bonded to anyone, I would not be able to say with so much conviction today that my education is simply the work of the Mother of God without any profounder human influence.”⁹⁴²

⁹⁴⁰ Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 35.

⁹⁴¹ Id., Pp. 3-4. The original text is: *Die Seele sollte von fremden Einflüssen, zumal personaler Art, möglichst unberührt, bleiben, um mit allen Fasern für die eigentliche Lehrmeisterin meines Lebens und deren Formkraft und Erziehungsweisheit geöffnet zu bleiben. Gemeint ist hier die Gottesmutter. Nicht erst von gestern und ehegestern nimmt sie diese Stellung in meinem Leben ein, seit urdenklichen Zeiten lebt sie unter diesem Gesichtspunkte in meinem bewußten Seelenleben. Es ist schwer festzustellen, von welchem Augenblicke an ich mich so ganz als ihr Werk und Werkzeug aufgefaßt und gewertet habe. Bis in frühe Kindstage läßt sich der Prozeß zurückverfolgen.... Ungezählt viele Male habe ich mich in vergangenen Jahren deshalb als Einsiedler in einer großen Wüstenei aufgefaßt, mich dabei aber allezeit in Verbindung mit der Gottesmutter als der großen Lehrmeisterin meines inneren und äußeren Lebens gesehen.*

⁹⁴² Kentenich, Joseph, *Talk on the occasion of the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of his ordination, August 11, 1935*, (ASP), (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: *Sie hat mich persönlich geformt und gestaltet von meinem 9. Lebensjahre an.... Wenn ich zurückschaue, darf ich sagen, ich kenne keinen Mensch, der einen tiefergehenden Einfluß auf meine Entwicklung ausgeübt hat. Millionen Menschen zerbrechen daran, wenn sie so auf sich selbst gestellt sind, wie ich das*

Thus it is very obvious that Mary played a very vital and deciding role in the life of Fr. Kentenich. It is also very clear from the autobiographical statements that Mary was much more than just a mother for him. She was his sole educator, his genuine advocate and a loyal companion on the highways of his life leading him closer to the Triune God. He owed to Mary everything that had come into existence. The Marian reality which sprouted as a bud during his childhood days began to unfold and influence the life and works of Fr. Kentenich to such a great extent that his spirituality, his character and his foundation took a strong Marian root and orientation. His entire life and work was marked by his loving relationship with Mary and nothing can be understood without it. It will throw much more light about the influence of Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich, when we take a short glimpse at the development of the Marian character in his life.

VI.3. The fundamental Mariological principles of Fr. Kentenich

The Marian life in the biography of Fr. Kentenich began to unfold, when he started observing life and its dynamism. He observed Marian life in a climate of free development. He was neither “embarrassed,” nor did he became “nervous”, when it came to Mary or Marian devotion even at the odd moments, when everything, connected with devotion to Mary was sliding backwards. He nurtured Marian life, even when a normal Catholic would think that it was already strong enough or even overflowing its banks. He let Marian substance assert itself according to its own dynamic. Because of this he was able to recognize so many things. But his observation was always with a reflective awareness. Fr. Kentenich lived totally in the Marian tradition of the Church.⁹⁴³ This was exactly the starting point of the Marian life of Fr. Kentenich.

He saw and proclaimed Mary the way she was depicted in the Bible and in the Church teaching. He did not try to compile a “life of Mary” from the various Biblical scenes nor was he interested in constantly attributing new privileges to Mary

gewesen. Ich mußte vollständig innerseelisch allein aufwachsen, weil eine Welt in mir geboren werden mußte, die später weitergetragen und weitergeleitet werden sollte. Hätte meine Seele Fühlung gehabt mit der damaligen Kultur, wäre ich irgend einmal persönlich gebunden gewesen, dann könnte ich heute nicht so ganz bestimmt sagen, daß meine Erziehung lediglich ein Werk der Gottesmutter war, ohne jeden tiefergehenden menschlichen Einfluß.

⁹⁴³ Cf., King, Herbert, *Die Erfahrung des Marianischen*, op.cit., P. 60.

but valued the interpretations handed down by tradition. He repeatedly pictured Mary in the language of the Gospels and the Book of Revelation. His keen interest was that the image of Mary depicted by the faith of the Church down through the centuries. In his teaching and preaching he never made use of private revelations, which he excluded as a “source of knowledge”. All he had to say about Mary was very down-to-earth, she like many of us had to go through the dark tunnel of darkness on her way of faith, and that she is therefore very close to us human beings. His attempt to understand and explain Mary in her God-willed calling and her role in salvation history was as well as based on the teachings of the Bible alone. It was also based on the professions of faith of the early Church Councils and the Marian dogmas which reflected the increasing awareness of the Church about Mary’s position. He also repeatedly referred to the teaching of the saints and the Papal Encyclicals of his time. He took an intense interest in the struggles and the pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council on Mary and felt confirmed in his position by its teaching. In short we can say that he taught the “objective” image of Mary of the Church: as it appears in Scripture, in tradition, in the awareness of the faithful, and in the Church’s Magisterium, and was formulated and substantiated by the solid proofs of dogmatic theology. This was his reflective awareness concerning the Marian life.⁹⁴⁴ Fr. Kentenich was both an attentive psychological observer and also a diligent defender of the image of Mary handed down by the Church. But still the keen quest for the Marian substance was more in his life and hence he kept on always searching and tapping. It was all the more on the rise when Marian devotion entered into its deep 20th century crisis.⁹⁴⁵ He himself expressed it in the following manner:

*“It was not as if I pursued a preconceived plan: This is what I want to accomplish. It is always a searching..., I have always tried [to ask myself]: how does the Blessed Mother educate in the family? And from that I read the entire system of education. It is therefore not the product of intellectual deliberations.”*⁹⁴⁶

The ultimate concern of Fr. Kentenich with regard to the Marian life was:

⁹⁴⁴ Cf., Wolf, Peter, *Mary: Her Mission according to Joseph Kentenich*, (translated by Mary Cole), Schoenstatt Publishing Co., Vallendar, Germany, 1999, Pp. 9-10.

⁹⁴⁵ Cf., Id.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid. The original text as cited is: „Das ist nicht so, als wenn ich persönlich von vorneherein gewollt: Das will ich erreichen. Es ist immer ein Suchen..., ich habe immer gesucht: wie wirkt denn die Gottesmutter erziehllich in der Familie? Und davon ist abgelesen das ganze Erziehungssystem. Es ist nicht Product der geistreichen Überlegungen (1963).“

“To listen and to understand the aspects and accents which God wished to highlight Mary’s image. The interpretation of Marian life thus became the interpretation of God passing over in history. His shorthand form for this is the “law of the open door”. God opened doors for him, through which he saw more and more elements of the divine plan with Mary. Especially the life impulses of people are such open doors, especially when it is not just a momentary thing, but bears continual fruit. Here is where the “law of the creative resultant” is important for the recognition of the God-willed image of Mary.”⁹⁴⁷

It would be very apt at this point of our discussion to take a close look at the image of Mary as portrayed by Fr. Kentenich himself.

VI.3.1. The biblical portrait of Mary by Fr. Kentenich

The objective image of Mary, that is, what theology says about the person, position, and efficacy of Mary is the basis for Marian devotion which tries to properly respond in life to the position God has given Mary.

“Fr. Kentenich’s portrayal of the image of Mary has two underlying themes. The one answers the question of the permanent and unchanging image of Mary, her position in the plan of salvation. The other explores the features of the image of Mary which are especially relevant and important today. His statements about the permanent image of Mary frequently relate to the Biblical image of Mary and refer to the Marian dogmas. But they revolve above all around a statement of principle about Mary’s position in the plan of salvation known as the “personal character”.⁹⁴⁸ One can notice very well that Fr. Kentenich places a special accent on Mary’s efficacy.”⁹⁴⁹

Fr. Kentenich is of the firm opinion that the Biblical image of Mary portrays her in complete simplicity yet chiseled clarity. It does not speculate, does not argue, and does not seek final principles. But it shows us Mary as she is. He asserts that it is the task of the dogmatic research and reflection to revisit the Biblical image again and again in order to find short formulae which encapsulate Mary’s main features and her place in the plan of salvation. The dogmatic image of Mary tries to find the key point from which the personality of Mary can be understood, the point to which

⁹⁴⁷ King, Herbert, *Die Erfahrung des Marianischen*, op.cit., P. 61, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus).

⁹⁴⁸ Personal character means the objective *character* (nature) of the role assigned to Mary’s *person* in the work of salvation.

⁹⁴⁹ Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin: Darstellung und Untersuchung der marianischen Lehre P. Joseph Kentenichs (1885-1968)*, Schönstatt-Studien Band 3, Patris Verlag, 1981, Pp. 40-41, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus).

all her characteristics, all her endowments, all her missions can ultimately be traced.⁹⁵⁰

Fr. Kentenich envisions her image from the description of the Bible in the following manner: For him Mary stands as a person with the *Ave* in her ear, the *Magnificat* on her lips, the *child* in her arms, *tongues of fire* above her head, a *sword* in her heart, the *dragon* under her feet and the woman completely *enveloped in light*. This is the most beautiful image as described and characterized by the Holy Spirit. And hence she is the most blessed of all in the entire creation. This is affirmed by Mary herself through her great and powerful words: *Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes* – See, from hence forth all generations shall call me Blessed! (Lk 1:48).⁹⁵¹

According to Fr. Kentenich the *Ave in her ear* points out the “Yes” spoken by the Mary in the name of humanity, on behalf of human nature: *Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* - Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word. At the same time it is an invitation that in her humanity all human nature should speak a free and voluntary “Yes” to the incarnation of the Eternal Word.

The second feature - *the Magnificat on her lips* (Lk 1:39-56) - describes her fundamental relationship to the eternal God, to the infinite God, to God’s plan for the world. It points out how the eternal and infinite God, has the bridle of world affairs in his hands and how he stands behind all things. It contemplates the great laws of world government and how God’s wisdom also applied this law to Mary and to her own people. It is the simple expression for: how God constantly accomplishes the greatest works through the smallest instruments, in this case it is the Mother of God. The Magnificat also reveals the strength, the authority, and the law of leadership of Eternal Wisdom applied to world events and to our own little lives.

The third feature - *the Child in her arms* (cf. Lk 2:6f.22.27) - tells us that Our Lady is the official *Christ-bearer*, *Christ-bringer*, and *Christ-server*. These three qualities define her fundamental relationship to Christ. She is the Mother of God and

⁹⁵⁰ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben Leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 16, Patris Verlag, 1991, P. 75.

⁹⁵¹ Cf., Ibid., P. 76, ; Cf., Kentenich Joseph, *Der marianische Mensch*, Theologentagung in Schönstatt vom 22.-26. April 1924, Manuskript, P. 7, ; Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Oktoberwoche 1950*, Vorträge vom 16.-20. Oktober 1950 an die Schönstattfamilie, Manuscript, P. 220.

it is her office, her role to give birth to Christ; it is her task to bring Christ to the people of this world. She is never separated from Our Lord and she always carries him in her heart, in her arms. This indicates that her entire being is oriented towards Christ, and it is very evident that her task is to serve Christ.

The fourth feature - *the sword in her heart* (cf. Lk 2:35.41-50; Jn 19:25ff) - tells us that her Son will be a “sign of contradiction” and she as His mother, who holds the most vital, essential and fundamental relationship to Our Lord will share every aspect of his destiny and the history of his mission. The suffering described here is the suffering of soul, more precisely, the suffering of compassion measured by the standard of love. The endless great love of Mary for our Lord determines the degree of her compassion and her mutual suffering with her Son, who endured physical and psychological suffering on the way of the cross.

The fifth feature - *tongues of fire over her head* (Acts 1:14; 2:1-4) - portrays Mary as the Mother of the Church. During the feast of Pentecost they were all one heart and soul with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and persevered in prayer (Act 1:14) - *Omnes erant unanimiter cum Maria matre Jesu perseverantes in oratione*. This shows that the Mary is the object of the outpouring of the Spirit and at the same time implores the descent of the Spirit in perfect fullness on the young Church.

The sixth feature - *the dragon under her feet* (Rev 12:16) - indicates Mary's great mission in relation to the devil. This feature portrays Mary as the great opponent of the devil whose's power is conquered.

And finally the seventh feature - *enveloped in light* - is drawn out from the Book of Revelation, which points out that Mary is clothed with and radiant with the sun (Rev 12: 1). It indicates that she is immersed completely in the life of our Lord, in the light of our Lord.⁹⁵²

Portraying this rich Biblical image of Mary, Fr. Kentenich draws conclusions and consequences from this image for us. He refers to the words of Cardinal Faulhaber⁹⁵³ to express the consequences: The first one he refers to is that: Just as Christ and Mary are always united in Sacred Scripture as Mother and Child, so too in

⁹⁵² Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben Leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 16, op. cit., Pp. 76-83.

⁹⁵³ Michael von Faulhaber (March 5, 1869 – June 12, 1952) was a Roman Catholic Cardinal who was Archbishop of Munich for 35 years, from 1917 to his death in 1952.
(cf., *Michael von Faulhaber*, in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_von_Faulhaber, 30.10.13.)

the liturgy. Therefore we must conclude: What the Lord has joined together let no man rend asunder.⁹⁵⁴ And hence for Fr. Kentenich our important task should be to courageously promote: “*Mother and Child, united in love.*” Fr. Kentenich asserts very strongly that if we want to help in redeeming the world, and if we ourselves want to take deeper roots in the grace of redemption, then we have no choice but to see to it that Mother and Child are constantly and tenderly connected in our thinking, living, and loving.⁹⁵⁵

“The second simple and beautiful word of the Cardinal, which Fr. Kentenich refers to is that: God in his wisdom did not hang grace up in the sky beyond our reach, nor hide it in the sea like pearls impossible for us to find; no, he has placed them in the hands of a mother, and the hands of a mother are always ready to give graces abundantly and superabundantly from her bountifulness.”⁹⁵⁶ Based on this beautiful fact, Fr. Kentenich says that if we desire to orient ourselves on the image of Mary and if it is our duty to orient our active participation in the offertory, the consecration, and communion, then we ought to first strive to beg from her the gift of a warm and tender love for her and to unceasingly strive, just like the several youthful saints did, until they could repeat the words: Others can outdo me in whatever they like, but never in the warmth and tenderness of my love for the loving Mother of God.”⁹⁵⁷

It is very obvious that Fr. Kentenich places a special accent on understanding the image of Mary because a great deal depends on it. One can’t get excited about what one doesn’t know. If one doesn’t know Our Lady, if her image is not alive in us, if she does not shine in our heart, then we will not get to love her. To love Mary with all our hearts plays a key role for Fr. Kentenich. Fr. Kentenich says that our whole daily life is ultimately a continuation of Holy Mass. It is an ongoing repetition, a profound, comprehensive repetition of the offertory, the consecration, and communion. His firm wish is that in a deep, tender union with Our Lady and

⁹⁵⁴ Cardinal Michael Faulhaber, *Rufende Stimmen in der Wüste der Gegenwart, Gesammelte Reden, Predigten, Hirtenbriefe* (Freiburg, 1931), p. 106: he writes: “Was das Evangelium verbunden hat, ‘das Kind und seine Mutter’ (Mt 2: 11. 13 f.), dürfen die Jünger des Evangeliums nicht trennen. Was mit Christus so verbunden ist wie seine Mutter, in Blutsverwandtschaft und Geistesverwandtschaft, darf die Christusreligion nicht auseinanderreißen. Die Grundmauern des Marienkultes liegen also auf den heiligen Bergen des Evangeliums.” (Footnote No. 13, in: Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben Leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 16, op. cit., P. 84.)

⁹⁵⁵ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben Leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 16, op. cit., Pp. 84-85.

⁹⁵⁶ Cardinal Michael Faulhaber, *Rufende Stimmen in der Wüste der Gegenwart, Gesammelte Reden, Predigten, Hirtenbriefe*, op. cit., P. 114: he writes: “Der Vater der Erbarmung hat seine Gnaden nicht an den Himmel gehängt wie seine Sterne, nicht in der Tiefe des Meeres versteckt wie seine Perlen, er hat sie in Mutterhände gelegt, und die sind immer bereit auszuteilen.” (Footnote No. 16, in: Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben Leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 16, op. cit., P. 85.)

⁹⁵⁷ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben Leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 16, op. cit., Pp. 85-86, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus).

according to her example we want to constantly circle the altar no matter whether we are working or eating or sleeping or playing. Here the key point is that “*inmost tender union with her*,” that is, driven by a warm, deep, tender love for her. According to him the degree that we give to Mary our hearts and love her with a sincere, heartfelt, tender love, is the degree we become like her in everything. This is possible because love is not only a unifying power, a power which unites souls, but also an assimilative power, a power that makes souls extraordinarily similar or to resemble one another. This assimilative power of love plays a vital role in becoming like Mary to constantly circle the altar to become like her even and especially in the way her life revolves around the bloody and non bloody sacrifice on Golgotha. To circle the altar just like her we need to first make sure that we are also deeply and tenderly united with her in love. Fr. Kentenich crystallizes this in a programme by saying: Through union with Mary to Mary’s attitude at the altar. “Union with Mary” is possible only by correctly seeing and portraying the image of Mary. If one has truly etched the image of Mary in one’s head and heart then it cannot fail that tomorrow one will be like that too.⁹⁵⁸

Having discussed the importance of the Biblical image of Mary for Fr. Kentenich let us now briefly discuss the personal character of Mary and her role in the plan of salvation as described by him.

VI.3.2. The Personal Character of Mary and her role in the work of redemption

A discussion had broken out in Germany about the *fundamental Mariological principle* during the 1930s. There was an attempt made at that time to summarize and focus the many aspects and individual pronouncements about Mary on a central key truth. Fr. Kentenich tried using his reflective nature to discover an intrinsic and convincing focal point or nexus for all the pronouncements about Mary and devotion to her. Again and again he came back to the union of Mother and Child, of Christ and Mary. Finally he succeeded in defining the fundamental, divine idea about Mary and her mission by using the expression: *Personal Character of Mary*.⁹⁵⁹ From 1941 onwards Fr. Kentenich uses the expression *Personal Character of Mary* to present the exposition of his dogmatic image of Mary. It is a formulation to frame the essential points in a single statement about the position of Mary in the plan of

⁹⁵⁸ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 90-93.

⁹⁵⁹ Cf., Wolf, Peter, *Mary: Her Mission according to Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 11.

salvation. The effort to structure the Mariology by the expression: *Personal Character of Mary* goes back to M.J. Scheeben.⁹⁶⁰ Scheeben's definition of Mary's *Personal Character* according to Fr. Kentenich described clearly God's eternal original idea of the organic unity of Mary's personality and task. And therefore Fr. Kentenich adopted it.⁹⁶¹

Before arriving at a clear formulation of Mary's Personal Character Fr. Kentenich critically studied and analyzed the fundamental principles of theologians with regard to Mary's Personal Character. In the attempt to formulate the fundamental principle the theologians tried to give an answer to the questions: In what lies the "Personal Character" of Mary? What is the source of her greatness?

The first answer was: the words *gratia plena* (full of grace) to express the "Personal Character" of Mary. These words were assumed to reflect the essence of her person and with that the entire Mariology. Fr. Kentenich could base everything upon the words *gratia plena* and could hear the entire Mariology echo in them. But in his opinion in the words *gratia plena* nothing is definitively clearly defined about Mary in a scholarly manner.

A second answer was: the *Mater Jesu*. This expression has often been taken as the core element of Mariology. It is very easy to accept that everything that God planned regarding Mary can be included in this title. But the Protestants accept the title *Mater Jesu* as it is found in the Bible and they accept only the *sensus obvius* (in the immediate sense). This is to say that Mary served our Lord as his mother, nothing more, nothing less and nothing else. But Mary's maternal care does not imply the

⁹⁶⁰ Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., P. 242. According to Vautier's research, only Hurter's Mariology was used in the teaching during the studies of Fr. Kentenich, which did not mention Scheeben's formulation of Mary's personal character. This indicates that Fr. Kentenich was not introduced to this term during his studies. (Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., P. 243.). In his research he further indicates that Father Kentenich did not have the dogmatic teaching of Scheeben in his hand until the year 1950. He was familiar with Scheeben's teaching through its edition by Feckes. Vautier expresses it in the following manner: "*Es gibt eine mündlich tradierte Aussage P. Kentenichs, er habe die Dogmatik Scheebens bis in die fünfziger Jahre hinein nicht in der Hand gehabt. Diese Aussage steht in einem besonderen Zusammenhang und darf nicht überinterpretiert werden. Tatsache ist, dass man alles, was sich bis 1941 bei P. Kentenich über die Mariologie Scheebens findet, durch Sekundärquellen belegen kann, die ich angeben werde. 1941 studierte P. Kentenich die Mariologie Scheebens allerdings nicht im originalen Text der Dogmatik, sondern in der bearbeiteten Ausgabe von Feckes, SCHEEBEN 1936.*" (Footnote, No. 247, in: Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., P. 243). A detailed explanation about the expression, the development and the meaning of personal character of Mary according to Fr. Kentenich is found in: Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., Pp. 67-68, 242-269.

⁹⁶¹ Cf., Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua: The role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for a pedagogy of Holiness in the thought of John Paul II and Father Joseph Kentenich*, University Press of America, Inc., 2010, P. 263.

virginity as a prerequisite before, during and after the birth of Christ. Catholic thought and intuition includes much more in the two words *Mater Jesu*. For Catholics, an entire tradition is contained in these words. And hence for Fr. Kentenich the shorter forms used to convey the “Personal Character” of Mary do not adequately render the entire Mariology even though the person using them might hear everything resonate in them.

A third answer was: Mary is the *second Eve*. This thought is a refined thought and scholarly sharply outlined. Therefore Fr. Kentenich asserts that this thought cannot be ignored while articulating the very essence of the person of Mary.

A fourth answer was: Mary is “*the divine motherly Spouse of our Lord (gottesmütterliche Braut) or the Spouse of God as well as the Mother of our Lord (gottesbräutliche Mutter des Herrn)*”. Fr. Kentenich finds it as a legitimate attempt to express what Catholic intuition understands by the expression *Mater Jesu*. However he found that the third and the fourth answers were also insufficient to express the “Personal Character” of Mary.⁹⁶²

The inadequate definitions and formulations of the theologians made Fr. Kentenich to formulate his own description of the “Personal Character” of Mary. He formulated it in the following manner:

*“The supernatural Personal Character of the dear Mother of God consists in the fact that she is and may be invoked as the uniquely dignified bridal permanent associate and permanent helpmate of Christ, the Head of all of creation, in His entire work of redemption.”*⁹⁶³

Almost ten years later in one of his talks during the October week 1950 he presented the following formulation: “*She is the official, dignified associate and helpmate of Christ, who is the head of the whole world and the Church in the entire work of redemption*”.⁹⁶⁴ This formulation of Fr. Kentenich found a greater echo in the 1950s and its shorter version became later on the classical definition: Mary is

⁹⁶² Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, Priesterexerzitien 1941, Manuskript, Pp. 36-38.

⁹⁶³ MP 1941, 38. Cf. CMA 1999, 276 footnote 194, as cited in: Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., P. 264. The original text is: „*Der übernatürliche Personalcharakter der lieben Gottesmutter besteht darin, daß sie ist und angerufen werden darf als die einzigartig würdige bräutliche Dauergenossin und Dauergehilfin Christi des Hauptes der ganzen Schöpfung, bei seinem ganzen Erlösungswerke.*“ (Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, op. cit., P. 38.).

⁹⁶⁴ Kentenich, Joseph, *Oktoberwoche 1950*, op. cit., P. 278. The original text is: „*Sie ist die amtliche, würdige Dauergefährtin und Dauerhelferin Christi als des Hauptes der ganzen Welt und der Kirche beim gesamten Erlösungswerke.*“

“the official and permanent associate and helpmate of Christ in the entire work of redemption”.⁹⁶⁵ Without doubt this classical definition includes all the gifts and privileges of Mary, namely, her *immaculate conception*, *divine maternity*, *perpetual virginity* and her *sinlessness*.⁹⁶⁶ Everything that can be said about Mary’s unique dignity and everything what has been expressed in the tradition of the church concerning her dignity can be traced back to her *permanent* and *official* association with Christ.⁹⁶⁷ All the dogmas are merely aspects of her permanent association with Christ. This formulation implicitly points out both to the ideal of Mary’s personality and to the ideal of her task. The expression: *official associate* indicates her existential being and the expression: *helpmate of Christ* indicates her task and mission. The “Personal Character” as *official associate* presents the Mother of God as the *co-player of Christ* and as *helpmate of Christ* she remains as an *opponent to Eve*.⁹⁶⁸ This can be expressed in the following manner:

“The ontological aspect of the Personal Character presents the Mother of God exquisitely as co-player of Christ. The effective aspect of the Personal Character presents the Mother of God as Eve’s opponent.”⁹⁶⁹

The above expression shows that his notion of Mary’s Personal Character is based on the *Adam-Christ* and *Mary-Eve* parallelism. By asserting that the Mother of God is the *official and permanent associate and helper of Christ*, Fr. Kentenich means that wherever we find Christ, Our Lady is also always present and active and wherever the Son has a position in salvation history, Mary is also always to be seen as the permanent associate and helper of Christ.⁹⁷⁰ It is very clear from his assertion that he sees Mary always in closest and inseparable union with Christ which is the underlying principle of the brief formula of Mary’s Personal Character. Fr. Kentenich himself asserts this point in the following manner:

⁹⁶⁵ Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 15, Patris Verlag, 1988, P. 120. The original text is: „...sie ist die amtliche Dauergefährtin und Dauerhelferin des Heilandes beim gesamten Erlösungswerk.“

⁹⁶⁶ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, op. cit., P. 38. A detailed discussion on how the Marian dogmas are related to the personal character of Mary is dealt in: Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., Pp. 265-276.

⁹⁶⁷ Cf., Wolf, Peter, *Mary: Her Mission according to Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 12.

⁹⁶⁸ Cf., Id., P. 39.

⁹⁶⁹ MP 1941, 39, as cited in: Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., P. 278. The original text is: „Der Personalcharakter als Sein stellt die Gottesmutter vorzüglich dar als Mitspielerin Christi. Der Personalcharakter als Wirken stellt die Gottesmutter dar als die Gegenspielerin Evas.“ (Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, op. cit., P. 39).

⁹⁷⁰ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band 5, (*Vorsehungsglaube in der Schönstattgeschichte*), Manuskript der Vorträge von 1962 and 1963 in Milwaukee, P. 34.

*“As the Coredemptrix and Mediatrix of Graces she is exalted over all that happens in the world and time, in closest, inseparable union with the Redeemer of the world. As a result the Christ-bearer becomes the bearer of the sacrifice, the preparer of the sacrifice, the servant of the sacrifice, the bringer of the sacrifice, and distributor of the fruits of the sacrifice. That is why we call her the official and permanent associate and helpmate of the Lord in his entire work of redemption.”*⁹⁷¹

To grasp the meaning of the Personal Character of Mary in a deeper form, we need to take a look at Fr. Kentenich’s explanation of it both in the *order of being* (ordo essendi) and in the *order of action* (ordo agendi).

VI.3.2.1. Mary, the official and permanent associate and helpmate in the order of being

At the very beginning we have to clarify Fr. Kentenich’s emphasis on the word “*official*”. Through this title Fr. Kentenich intends to say that Mary is not a private person just like anybody. She is a very special person entrusted with a mission for salvation of the world. She has an official position in the plan of salvation and nobody should overlook this fact.⁹⁷² The *permanent* character is based on the fundamental union between Christ and Mary in the plan of salvation. This unity between Christ and Mary is characterized by Fr. Kentenich as: “*Praedestinatio mutual, perfecta, perpetua, absoluta*”.⁹⁷³ The “*two-in oneness*” relationship is ordained in the plan of God for all eternity. This was the decision of God himself who has

“made the Blessed Mother the absolutely necessary official Helpmate of Christ, that means He has given her the office of assisting Our Lord in every situation involving the redemption of the world; He has given her the office in such a way that, having devised this plan, He would never alter it and in a certain sense therefore never be able to or want to bypass it. (...) To this one and the same divine decision, both (Christ and Mary) owe their existence, position, and mission which are so intimately bound up with one another. So inseparably are they united in their being, outlook, and task that both are – as follows God’s wish and will

⁹⁷¹ LSch 1952, I, P. 93, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is : „...als Miterlöserin und allgemeine Gnadenvermittlerin über allem Welt- und Zeitgeschehen in engster, unzertrennlicher Verbindung mit dem Welterlöser. Dadurch wird die Christusträgerin zur Opferträgerin, zur Opferbereiterin, zur Opfertienerin, zur Opferbringerin, zur Verteilerin der Opferfrüchte. Wir nennen sie deshalb die amtliche Dauergefährtin und Dauerhelferin des Herrn beim gesamten Erlösungswerke.“

⁹⁷² Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Oktoberwoche 1950*, op. cit., P. 281.

⁹⁷³ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, op. cit., Pp. 64-65, ; Cf., Ibid., Pp. 277-278.

and His unchangeable plan – completely and permanently dependent on one another.”⁹⁷⁴

Fr. Kentenich uses the words *bride* and *mother* to explain the *Personal Character* of Mary. Ontologically speaking Mary became the *associate of Christ* when God chose her as His *bride* at her conception. Fr. Kentenich unfolds this *bridal relationship* with Christ in a fourfold sense.

In the widest sense (*unio iuridica*) Mary became the bride of Christ through incarnation. When the Word of God assumed the human nature in the womb of Mary through her Yes, not only Mary entered into a unique and dignified bridal relationship but also the entire humanity entered into this bridal relationship through the person of Mary, who in her person represented the entire human race. Thus through this bridal relationship the endless stream of God’s love was poured on the whole of humanity.

In the wider sense (*unio-quasi-physica*), it can be said that, in the light of faith every soul, which is in the state of grace is the bride of Christ. The Church is *per eminentiam* the bride of Christ. When both souls and the Church can be brides of Christ, how much more Mary, who is the original and the most excellent member of the Church, should be the bride of Christ because of her state of grace during her birth and at the time of Annunciation.

In the narrowest sense (*unio hypostatica*) it is applicable only to the union of Christ’s divine and human nature. This union of the divine and human natures can be called the bride of Christ. This bridal relationship excels all others and signifies the elevation of the state of human nature to a noble position. Mary was not blessed to experience such an intimate spousal union with Christ.

In the narrow sense (*unio quasi-hypostatica*) Mary became the unique bride of Christ at the time of the Immaculate Conception. From the first moment of her existence Mary was conceived and created as associate and helpmate of Christ and she exists as the bride espoused to the Eternal Word. From the first moment of her conception the *Verbum Divinum* espoused her and united her to Himself in an admirably profound way. It was a *matrimonium ratum* between the Mother of God and divinity. This *matrimonium ratum* grows into *matrimonium consummatum* when

⁹⁷⁴ Kentenich, Joseph, *Mary, our Mother and Educator: An applied Mariology*, (translated by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus), Schönstatt Sisters of Mary, Waukesha, 1987, Pp. 79-80, (my emphasis).

the Eternal Word and Mary beget the God-Man in a sublime union, which can be hardly described. This sublime union is called *connubium divinum*. Thus Mary could be both bride and Mother of God. She is first the bride and then Mother of God. She is bride of the *Verbum divinum* at the incarnation and she is the Mother of God because through her free decision she offers the motherly seed to the *Verbum divinum*. This motherly seed unites itself with the created spiritual soul to an indissoluble personal unity. Analogically speaking we can say that Mary through her free decision provided everything to her divine Child, just like any other mother would give at the time of conception to their child. Thus she can be first the bride and then the Mother of the divine son.⁹⁷⁵

VI.3.2.2. Mary, the official and permanent associate and helpmate in the “order of action”

The fundamental function of Mary in the “order of action” is the *co-operative activity of the Blessed Mother*.

*“Father Kentenich proposed Mary’s co-operation is that of a bride. Psychologically, he interpreted the spousal co-operation as “receptive surrender and reverend service”. Theologically, it needs to be understood as **cooperatio ministerialis**: Christ shed his blood for our redemption while Our Lady cooperated **per affectum cordis**”.*⁹⁷⁶

According to Fr. Kentenich Mary’s function as the permanent helpmate to Christ is rooted in being the permanent associate of Christ. He asserts that just because Mary remains as the unique, dignified, bridal permanent associate of Christ, she is also privileged to be the unique, dignified, bridal permanent helpmate of Christ. Before speaking about the *co-operative activity of Mary* a clear distinction between Mary and Our Lord must be made. Though they are very closely united with each other yet we cannot put them at the same level because Mary is a mere creature and the God-Man is the eternal God. The greatness and the dignity of Mary, though they seem to be unending and beyond measure yet there is an infinite distance between her and the God-Man. This clearly points out to the fact that the cooperative

⁹⁷⁵ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, op. cit., Pp. 40-47, 49, ; Cf., Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., Pp. 278-279, ; Cf., Naumann, Rita Maria Isabell, *Cum Maria ad altare - Toward an integration of Mariology and Ecclesiology: The interrelation between Mary and the Church in the Works of Father J. Kentenich with special attention given to his sermons at St. Michael’s, Milwaukee, USA, from October 1964 to January 1965*, Schönstatt Sisters of Mary, Waukesha, 1999, Pp. 283-284.

⁹⁷⁶ Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., P. 280.

activity of Mary in the plan of salvation will definitely differ from that of the work of redemption brought about by Christ. Mary's co-operation in the plan of salvation can neither be of the same kind nor can be of equal value but it has the same value. This means that her cooperative activity is preparatory, well-rounded (complementary), to some extent embellishing, representative and symbolic. Mary's function as bridal helpmate must therefore include all these qualities and all of the co-operative activity of Mary must be seen from this perspective. Though the co-operative activity of Mary is rich in qualities it is an undeniable fact that Christ's act of redemption was independent and complete in itself. It is a work complete and autonomous in itself. If this is so one can raise the question: What did Mary add? What did she complement? Or to what extent is Mary the permanent helpmate of Christ? To begin with, we can say, that Mary, as *permanent helpmate of Christ*, assisted Christ, the Head of *all* creation in the entire plan of salvation - in the incarnation, in the sacrifice on the cross on Golgotha and in the distribution of graces.⁹⁷⁷ At the incarnation Christ made Himself dependent on Mary. Pope Leo XIII in his "*Octobri Mense*" says:

*"When the eternal Son of God intended to take our human nature upon Himself for the redemption and ennoblement of mankind, and by this consummated a mystical espousal with the whole human race, He did not do this without first receiving the free consent of His selected Mother who, to a certain extent, represented in herself the role of the entire human race."*⁹⁷⁸

This free decision of Mary made the incarnation possible because Mary offered the motherly seed of life to the Son of God and this paved the way for God to enter into His creation.⁹⁷⁹ Thus we can say that Mary's co-operative activity at the time of incarnation was not just preparatory or complementary rather it was essential. Though this was the high point of her co-operation yet her activity was merely complementary because this motherhood involved and included maternity for all of humanity.⁹⁸⁰

Secondly if we look at Mary beneath the cross on Golgotha, we can see the same mutual oneness and dependence between the Redeemer of the world and His helpmate on Golgotha. Mary had to freely say the required Yes to the death of the

⁹⁷⁷ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, op. cit., Pp. 50-53, ; Cf., *With Mary into the New Millennium*, op. cit., Pp. 71-74.

⁹⁷⁸ Leo XIII, encyclical "*Octobri Mense*," September 22, 1891; cf. *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 113, as cited in: Kentenich, Joseph, *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, op. cit., Pp. 80-81.

⁹⁷⁹ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, op. cit., P. 81.

⁹⁸⁰ Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Der Marianische Priester*, op. cit., P. 53.

Redeemer in the name of mankind. Through this Yes she freely renounced her rights as His Mother, surrendered her Son for our sinfulness and united her sacrifice with His. Only after her *Yes* the Saviour could accomplish the last part of the work of redemption by exclaiming “It is consummated!” (Jn 19:30). Thus she became our Coredemptrix and our Mother at the foot of the cross. This co-operative activity as Christ’s helpmate by standing under the cross as a sign of her Yes was again co-operative in the above fourfold sense.⁹⁸¹

Thirdly, the fruits of redemption cannot be realized without the co-operation between Christ and Mary. Fr. Kentenich takes recourse to the teaching of the Magisterium to highlight the co-operative activity of Mary by quoting Pius X who says:⁹⁸²

*“From Mary’s community of suffering and will with Christ she has merited the dignity of being the **Reparatrix of the lost world** and therefore of also being the **Dispensatrix of all graces** which Jesus has merited for us by His death and His blood.”*⁹⁸³

Thus we see that in meriting graces, at the Annunciation, under the cross and in the distribution of graces, Mary is the permanent helpmate of Christ. Fr. Kentenich points out two limitations concerning her co-operation. The first limitation is that Mary in her being is *ancilla Domini*. This indicates the absolute sovereignty of God and therefore she can in no way use any force on God. The second limitation is constituted by the order of grace. This indicates that only through the sacraments and through the merits of good works, graces can be transmitted. Mary can neither transmit the sanctifying grace nor can she reward a person beyond his/her merits.⁹⁸⁴

It is very interesting to note that the description of the *Personal Character* of Mary by Fr. Kentenich found resonance in the teaching of the Vatican II about Mary in *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter VIII:

*“...the Blessed Virgin was on this earth the virgin Mother of the Redeemer, and above all others and **in a singular way the generous associate** and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this **singular way she***

⁹⁸¹ Cf., Id. ; Cf., Ibid.

⁹⁸² Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, op. cit., P. 82.

⁹⁸³ Pius X, encyclical “Ad diem illum laetissimum,” February 2, 1904; cf. *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 233. Emphasis Fr. Kentenich’s, as cited in: Ibid.

⁹⁸⁴ Cf., Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., Pp. 280-281.

cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace."⁹⁸⁵

*"This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the **Annunciation** and which she sustained without wavering **beneath the cross**, and lasts **until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect**. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession **continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation**. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and cultics, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and **Mediatrix**. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator.*"⁹⁸⁶

This teaching of the Vatican Council II was an important confirmation of the teaching of Fr. Kentenich and it presented a holistic view about Mary in the work of redemption, which was very much appreciated by him., As Fr. Kentenich reflected on the fundamental Mariological principle it became very clear to him that he was very much reflecting and dealing with the *Personal Character* of Mary: "*official and permanent associate and helpmate of Christ in the entire work of redemption*".⁹⁸⁷ He firmly believed that it must have been the way God has called Mary in the plan of salvation and it became a great matter of concern for him all throughout his life. In a letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen in 1954 Fr. Kentenich writes about this Personal Character of Mary and how important its discovery for him and what a great treasure it is for the Schönstatt Family. He says:

⁹⁸⁵ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 61, as cited in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 01.11.13, (my emphasis).

⁹⁸⁶ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 62, Loc. cit., (my emphasis).

⁹⁸⁷ See: Kentenich, Joseph, *Desiderio Desideravi*: Vorträge von 1962 und 1963 in Milwaukee, 9 Bände, Manuskript, Band I, P. 111f; Band V, P. 34f; Band VII, Pp. 114f, 132f; Band X, P. 197f, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *Desiderio Desideravi*), ; Kentenich, Joseph, *USA-Terziat*, Vorträge von July-August 1952 in Milwaukee, 3 Bände. Manuskript, Band I, Pp. 117, 339-342; Band II, Pp. 181f, 215-220, 241f, 334, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *USA-Terziat*), ; Kentenich, Joseph, *Das Lebensgeheimnis Schönstatts: II. Teil Bündnisfrömmigkeit*, Patris Verlag, 1972, Pp. 87-90, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *LSch 1952, II*), ; Kentenich, Joseph, *Dauergefährten und Dauergehilfen Christi: Zum überzeitlichen Marienbild und seiner zeitgeschichtlichen Ausprägung*, in: *REGNUM* 13, II, 1978, Pp. 125-131, ; Pereira, Benjamin, *Marianische Sendung*, in: *REGNUM* 4, I, 1969, P. 56-57, ; Kentenich, Joseph, *Brasilienterziat*, Terziat der Pallottinerpatres in Santa Maria, Brasilien vom 16. Februar - 5. März 1952, Band III, Manuskript, Schönstatt, Pp. 181-182, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *Brasilienterziat*).

“Over the course of the years, experiences and observations in the religious sphere went hand in hand with our gaining a deepened and more comprehensive understanding of Mary’s role in the plan of salvation. These experiences can be seen as rings of growth which developed almost effortlessly around the original core — the notion of Our Lady as the official Christ-bearer. Therefore it was not difficult for us — long before wider circles in the Church got so far — to expound the characteristics of Mary’s person, i.e. we formulated the basic and central thought which determined the image and role of Mary in the divine plan, and which thus easily explains how God equipped her in regard to the characteristics and tasks he gave her — just as one can trace a river back to its source. We only had to follow up the idea of Mary being the Christ-bearer to its ultimate conclusion. So it came about that from then on we spoke of Our Lady as the official and permanent Helpmate of the Saviour in the entire work of redemption, or, to put it briefly, as the “Sponsa et consors Christi”, or likewise, as Christ’s official collaborator and the official opponent of Satan. This sheds bright light on Mary’s co-operation at the hour of the Annunciation, on Golgotha and from heaven. With great love the family immersed itself again and again in these great Mariological truths. All the issues which came up for discussion during the Marian year had been alive in the family for a long time beforehand; we kept them alive and they were solved within the family.”⁹⁸⁸

It was his firm belief that one can understand this *Personal Character* of Mary only within the framework of salvation history. It was in her person that the work of the Triune God became visible. God the Father is the source and origin of her existence; at the sametime he is also the one who steers her life story. The Holy Spirit is the well-spring of her inner life and Mary is the Holy-Shrine in which the Eternal Word assumed the human nature through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result of these facts, Fr. Kentenich emphasizes her role in the plan of salvation in the

⁹⁸⁸ Kentenich, Joseph, *Die heilsgeschichtliche Stellung Mariens und die Frühzeit Schönstatts*, in: REGNUM 6, I, 1971, P. 152, (translated by: Mary Cole; my emphasis). The original text is: „Mit den religiösen Erfahrungen und Beobachtungen verbanden sich im Laufe der Jahre vertiefte und umfassende Erkenntnisse über Mariens Stellung im Heilsplane. Sie wollen wie Wachstumsringe aufgefaßt werden, die sich fast mühelos um den ursprünglichen Kern - um die Idee der amtlichen Christusgebäuerin - bilden. So fiel es uns nicht schwer - lange bevor die breitere kirchliche Öffentlichkeit sich damit beschäftigte, Mariens Personalcharakter herauszustellen, d. h. den Wurzel-, den Kern- oder Zentralgedanken zu formulieren, der Mariens Gestalt und Rolle in der göttlichen Planung bestimmt hat, auf den deshalb ihre Ausstattung, ihre Eigenschaften und Aufgaben leicht zurückgeführt werden können - etwa wie der Strom auf die Quelle. Wir brauchten nur die Idee der amtlichen Christusgebäuerin bis zu Ende durchzudenken. So kam es, daß wir seit der Zeit von Maria als der amtlichen Dauergefährten und Dauerhelferin des Herrn beim gesamten Erlösungswerke sprechen oder - kurz gefaßt - von der Sponsa et consors Christi oder - was dasselbe besagt - von der amtlichen Mitspielerin Christi und der amtlichen Gegenspielerin Luzifers. Von hier aus fiel fortan helles Licht auf Mariens mithelfende Tätigkeit bei der Verkündigungsszene, . . . auf Golgotha ... und vom Himmel aus. Mit großer Liebe versenkte sich die Familie wieder und wieder in alle diese großen mariologischen Wahrheiten. Alle Fragen, die im marianischen Jahr die Geister bewegen, waren lange, lange vorher in der Familie lebendig, haben sie lebendig erhalten und eine Lösung gefunden.“

first place and then in the second place speaks about her privileges of grace bestowed upon her by God. Her function as *official and permanent associate and helpmate of Christ* was so important to him that, *to proclaim the Personal Character of Mary and to serve Our Lady's mission* turned out to be his personal *Marian mission*.⁹⁸⁹ This is how he expressed it on his 73rd birthday while addressing the married couples in Milwaukee.

*“What was the mission that was handed over to me seventy-three years ago? With a side-glance at St Paul, I think I may say: It was and is my mission to proclaim the mystery of Mary to the world. It is my task to make the Blessed Mother known, to reveal her to our times as the permanent helper of Our Lord in his entire work of redemption, as the co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of Grace; as Mother of God, deeply united with our Lord - a two-in-oneness - with her specific mission from her Schönstatt Shrine for our present times.”*⁹⁹⁰

Fr. Kentenich never wished to be a “*solo Marian missionary*” and hence he extended his mission to the entire Schönstatt Family by saying:

*“My dear Schönstatt Family - I may say, all of you are drawn into my mission. This mission was not placed on my shoulders alone, but also upon the shoulders of all Schönstatt children. God has called you to help me fulfill this great mission.”*⁹⁹¹

Thus we can clearly understand from our above discussion that the image of Mary and her role in the plan of salvation play a very vital role in understanding the Marian mission of Fr. Kentenich. Throughout his life Fr. Kentenich was not just promoting devotion to her but his wish was always that we live like Mary. Her mission was to co-operate and to play the role in the salvation plan as associate and helpmate of Christ and it was very important beyond her actual historical life. Her whole being was completely directed towards Christ and His mission. She existed for Him alone. It was the wish of Fr. Kentenich that we too become like Mary by completely committing ourselves for the mission of God. This is called the Marian

⁹⁸⁹ Cf., Wolf, Peter, *Mary: Her Mission according to Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., Pp. 19-20, ; Cf., Pereira, Benjamin, *Marianische Sendung*, Loc. cit., P. 56.

⁹⁹⁰ Kentenich, Joseph, *Talk given to the married couples in the Shrine at Holy Cross in Milwaukee on November 16, 1958*, (ASP), (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Was war denn die Sendung, die mir vor 73 Jahren aufgetragen wurde. Mit einem Seitenblick auf den heiligen Paulus darf ich sagen: Meine Sendung war es und ist es, der Welt das Mariengeheimnis zu künden! Meine Aufgabe ist es, die Gottesmutter zu künden, sie unserer Zeit zu entschleiern als die Dauerhelferin des Heilandes beim gesamten Erlösungswerk, als die Miterlöserin und Gnadenvermittlerin; die Gottesmutter, die tief mit dem Heiland geeint - eine Zweieinheit - mit der spezifischen Sendung, die sie von ihrem Schönstattheiligtum aus hat für die heutige Zeit!“

⁹⁹¹ Ibid.

way of following Christ. Marian Mission and the application of her life to our everyday life cannot be carried out without an inner relationship of love with her and without having proper devotion to her. The heartbeat of the Schönstatt Movement is the spirituality of consecrating oneself to Mary. Though consecrating oneself to Mary was a very common practice in the tradition of the Church, Fr. Kentenich developed this spirituality of consecrating oneself to Mary into a deeper form. He developed a spirituality, which is based on a living, loving, vibrant and vital love to Mary, which is an all-embracing and reciprocal self-giving. It is a spirituality, where a person surrenders oneself totally to Mary in love and places oneself entirely at her disposal, so that she could use this person for her mission. This spirituality is known as “the Covenant of Love”. The main aim of this spirituality is to carry out the mission of Mary into the actual lives of the individual and the Movement and to help to carry it out. In other words: by practicing this spirituality Mary’s mission as the permanent associate and helpmate of Christ in his entire work of redemption could be converted into life both in the world and in the Church. Therefore Fr. Kentenich affirms that the Covenant of Love is rooted in Mary’s position in the order of Salvation.⁹⁹² Before plunging into the depths of the spirituality of Covenant of Love, it is necessary to take a look at the root of this spirituality from the perspective of Fr. Kentenich.

VI.4. Covenant of Love - Rooted in Mary’s position in the order of salvation

It is an undeniable fact that the subjective motivations and subjective love of a person play a very vital role in consecrating oneself to Mary. But at the very outset Fr. Kentenich affirms that the main foundation for consecration to Mary - both for the Schönstatt consecration and for the Papal world consecration - is based on the objective position which God has assigned to Mary in the plan of salvation.⁹⁹³ He unfolds this thought in a more elaborate manner by saying:

⁹⁹² Cf., Id., Pp. 20, 25-28.

⁹⁹³ Kentenich, Joseph, *Letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen, Milwaukee, August 3, 1954*, unpublished. (Officially termed as *Zwanzigerbrief*, 236 S.), P. 210. The original text is: „Das Wissen um solche Zusammenhänge macht die Seele frei und aufgeschlossen für Verständnis der aufgestellten ersten These, die hien und drüben, will heißen, bei der Schönstattweihe und bei der päpstlichen Weltweihe dieselbe Grundlage und denselben Grundsinn, dieselbe Grundforderung und dieselbe Grundfrucht feststellt.“

*“The unshakeable fundamental basis for both consecrations is the great law upon which all considerations and structures without exception are built in Schönstatt and by which we live. From the beginning we have unshakably held fast to it in the greatest and smallest things – **ordo essendi est ordo agenda. Or, operatio sequitur esse.** Translated: The objective order of being is the binding and obligatory norm for everything we live and do. (....) Applied to our case, we are plainly dealing with Mary’s objective position in the Christian order of the world with special emphasis on its relevance today. (....) Given the significance of world consecration ... allow me to invoke the afore mentioned law and make the following summary statement: the dogmatic basis for world consecration is the objective position of Our Lady in the current order of salvation with special emphasis on its relevance today.”⁹⁹⁴*

Just like the *Yes* of Mary at the time of Annunciation and on Golgotha cannot be separated from the central act of our salvation, so also one cannot separate the gift Christ our Saviour has given us on the Cross with the words: *“Behold your Mother”* from the central act of salvation. This very fact binds us to Mary in a way which is rooted in the order of salvation. According to Fr. Kentenich the objective order of salvation in its concrete historical form is Marian in character in a fundamental way, which he expresses in the following manner:⁹⁹⁵

“God wishes humanity – as individuals and as a whole – indeed wishes for all creation, inasmuch as its fate is bound up with man, to be indeed eternally joined to him in Christ, but through Mary. Or: That humanity and creation attain their supernatural conjoined perfection in the living union with the Triune God in Christ, but through Mary. This is why he gave Mary a singular, universal, unavoidable mediatory position in tender two-in-oneness with and dependence on Christ. As the Second Person of the Trinity

⁹⁹⁴ Niehaus, Jonathan (ed.), *Exchange of Hearts: The transforming power of consecration to the Immaculate heart of Mary* by Fr. Joseph Kentenich, Schönstatt Fathers, Institute for Formation and Research, Vallendar, Germany, 2011, P. 96-97, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *Exchange of Hearts*). The original text is: „In beiden Weihungen ist - ganz allgemein gesprochen - die unerschütterliche Grundlage das große Bau- und Lebensgesetz, das wir in Schönstatt bei allen Erwägungen und Einrichtungen, bei allen ohne Ausnahme: bei den größten und bei den kleinsten von Anfang an unentwegt festgehalten und verwirklicht haben: *ordo essendi est ordo agenda...* Oder: *operatio sequitur esse...* Zu deutsch: die objektive Seinsordnung ist bindende und verpflichtende Norm für unsere Lebens- und Wirkform.... Angewandt auf unseren Fall geht es offenbar hier um die objektive Stellung Mariens in der christlichen Weltordnung mit besonderer Betonung ihrer Gegenwartsbedeutung. Bei solcher Tragweite der Weltweihe ist die Frage....Laß mich - vom Allgemeinen zum Besonderen voranschreiten - mit Berufung auf das oben umschriebene Bau- und Lebensgesetz – nun - zunächst zusammenfassend sagen: die dogmatische Grundlage für die Weltweihe ist die objektive Stellung der Gottesmutter in der gegenwärtigen Heilsordnung mit besonderer Betonung ihrer Gegenwartsbedeutung.“ (Kentenich, Joseph, *Letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen*, Milwaukee, August 3, 1954, op. cit., Pp. 210-211, 212.)

⁹⁹⁵ Cf., *Exchange of Hearts*, Pp. 95, 98.

came to us through her, we too should take the same way to go to him and the Blessed Trinity...."⁹⁹⁶

Fr. Kentenich also expresses this same thought in a very strong manner in one of his sermons where he says:

*"It is... that the concrete order of salvation is also attuned to the truth spoken by Christ that "No one comes to the Father, unless it be through the Son" (cf Jn 14:6). In other words, whoever wants to come to the Father and be captivated by the love of the Father must strive for a tender love of Christ. But this is not the end of the concrete order of salvation. How often have we not heard...that Our Lord, for the entire order of salvation, forms a single two-in-oneness with his Mother. Christ and Mary are a single principle of redemption, an inseparable, irrevocably inseparable two-in-oneness! (....) Therefore, no one comes to the Father, unless it be through the Son and in connection with our dear Blessed Mother."*⁹⁹⁷

The above saying of Fr. Kentenich clearly points out to the fact that Mary's unique position in the order of salvation forms the foundation of our consecration to Mary. He states it in the following way:

*"Like Christ and the Heavenly have right to receive our total surrender, in a similar way Our Lady has a right to receive our total surrender. And when we do that, it is in order to unite ourselves still more deeply and tenderly with Christ and with our Heavenly Father. Surrender, total surrender to the Blessed Mother is an expression, a safeguard, and a means to attaining an irrevocably deep, serious, and tender self-surrender to Christ and God the Father. With that...we touch the foundation of our consecration to Mary."*⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid., Pp. 98-99. The original text is: „Gott will, daß die Menschheit - sei es als Individuum, sei es in ihrer Ganzheit, ja, daß die ganze Schöpfung, insofern sie das Schicksal der Menschheit berührt, - ihm ewig angeeignet wird in Christus, aber durch Maria. Oder: daß Menschheit und Schöpfung ihre übernatürliche Gemeinschaftsvollendung in der lebendigen Vereinigung mit dem dreieinigen Gott in Christus, aber durch Maria erreicht. Deshalb hat er Maria eine einzigartige, eine universelle, eine unumgängliche Mittlerstellung in inniger Zweieinheit mit Christus und in Abhängigkeit von ihr gegeben. Wie die zweite Person durch sie zu uns gekommen ist, so sollen wir auf demselben Weg zu ihm und zum dreifaltigen Gott kommen...“ (Kentenich, Joseph, *Letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen*, Milwaukee, August 3, 1954, op. cit., P. 213.)

⁹⁹⁷ Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben leben: Predigten in Milwaukee*, Band 3, Patris Verlag, 1970, P. 109, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Das ist ..., daß die konkrete Heilsordnung auf den Ton abgestimmt ist, den der Heiland uns so wiedergibt: Niemand kommt zum Vater, es sei denn durch den Sohn (vgl. Jo 14, 6). Wer also zum Vater kommen will, Vaterergriffenheit sein eigen nennen will, der muß nach Christusinnigkeit streben. Aber damit ist die konkrete Heilsordnung noch nicht abgeschlossen. Wie häufig haben wir ...gehört, daß der Heiland mit seiner Mutter für die ganze Heilsordnung eine einzige große Zweieinheit darstellt. Heiland und Gottesmutter ein einziges Erlösungsprinzip, unzertrennliche, unwiderruflich unzertrennliche Zweieinheit! (....) Darum, niemand kommt zum Vater, es sei denn durch den Sohn und in Verbindung mit der lieben Gottesmutter.“

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid., Pp. 109-110, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Die Gottes-

Thus we can say that “*Marian consecration is nothing more than the generally valid and binding application of the law of *ordo essendi est ordo agendi* to Mary’s position in the order of salvation.*”⁹⁹⁹ Fr. Kentenich states in a very clear manner that Mary’s position and mission in the plan of salvation shaped the Founding Document of Schönstatt, which is a matter of fundamental importance to the Schönstatt family and also the Marian devotion to a great extent. He expresses this in the following manner:

*“Mary’s position and mission in the work of salvation for all times and for this particular time (...) has been decisive for us Schönstatters from the beginning. It had an essential share in shaping the Founding Document, subsequently making Marian devotion not only our form principle but the formal principle of our entire education.”*¹⁰⁰⁰

This is an important statement of Fr. Kentenich because the Founding Document provides us the basis to understand the spirituality of Covenant of Love. In other words we can say that, if Mary’s position has shaped the Founding Document, then the Founding Document has shaped the entire spirituality of Covenant of Love. Therefore we can comfortably conclude that the Covenant of Love is rooted in Mary’s position in the order of salvation. Having explored the roots of the Covenant of Love, let us now discuss the historical evolution of the Covenant of Love and its dynamism.

mutter hat ähnlich, freilich nur ähnlich wie der Heiland und wie der Himmelsvater ein Anrecht auf unsere vollkommene Hingabe, sie hat ein Anrecht darauf. Und wenn wir uns ihr hingeben, dann tun wir das, um tiefer, inniger mit dem Heiland und dem Himmelsvater verknüpft zu werden. Hingabe, Ganzhingabe an die Gottesmutter ist Ausdruck, ist Sicherung und Mittel, um zu einer unwiderruflich tiefen, ernsten, innigen Hingabe an den Heiland und den Vatergott zu gelangen..., damit berühren wir das Fundament für unsere Weihe an die liebe Gottesmutter.“

⁹⁹⁹ Kentenich, Joseph, *Letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen, Milwaukee, August 3, 1954*, op. cit., P. 214, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „...Marienweihe - wie ohne weiteres ersichtlich ist - weiter nichts als die allgemein gültige und bindende Anwendung des dargestellten Bau- und Lebensgesetzes - *ordo essendi est ordo agendi* - auf die Stellung der Gottesmutter in der Heilsordnung.“

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Exchange of Hearts*, P. 97. The original text is: „Die überzeitliche und die zeitbedingte Stellung und Sendung der Gottesmutter im Heilsgeschehen war - wie später eigens dargestellt werden soll - für uns Schönstatter von Anfang an wegweisend und ausschlaggebend. Sie hat die Gründungsurkunde wesentlich mitbestimmt und in der Folge die Marienverehrung nicht nur zum Form-, sondern zum Formalprinzip der ganzen Erziehung gemacht.“ (Kentenich, Joseph, *Letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen, Milwaukee, August 3, 1954*, op. cit., P. 212.)

VI.5. The historical development of the Covenant of Love and its significance

Generally speaking we can say that the term “*Covenant of Love*” is used as a keyword in Schönstatt for the act of consecration to Mary as the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schönstatt. In short it is the official name for its Marian consecration and it is the “*fundamental norm and form of Schönstatt spirituality*”.¹⁰⁰¹ In the history of salvation one cannot overlook the fact that God entered into a covenant with His creatures, which was an act of love. The fundamental characteristic feature of a “*covenant*” is always mutual, which includes a reciprocal self-giving. It implies an agreement, a mutual pact of love between two partners. This is the governing character in the spirituality of Covenant of Love where a mutual self-giving takes place between Mary and those who consecrate themselves to her. The term “*Covenant of Love*” at its very outset refers to the historic event which took place on October 18, 1914 in the chapel of grace in Schönstatt between Mary and the founding generation of Schönstatt under the leadership and guidance of Fr. Kentenich. This historic event did not take place all of a sudden due to the divine intervention in the form of apparitions or in any other form. It is an event, which is the result of a careful study of the guidance of the Divine Providence carried out by Fr. Kentenich at various moments of his life. Let us now journey through these various historic events in the life of Fr. Kentenich to find out the various factors which contributed in a significant manner underlying the **bold decision taken by him on October 18th, 1914.**

Fr. Kentenich was appointed as spiritual director on October 25, 1912 of the German Pallottine seminarians in Vallendar, especially for the upper classes. On October 27, 1912 in the study hall above the library where fifty students were gathered, Fr. Kentenich gave a talk. He came up with a new vision of how to exercise the freedom of the person in a free community. It was a new programme for education to freedom. The purpose of presenting this new programme was to enable the students to build their relationship based on free mutual co-operation and not on rules. He framed the programme for education in the following manner:¹⁰⁰² “*Under the protection of Mary we want to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free,*

¹⁰⁰¹ Wolf, Peter, *Mary: Her Mission according to Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 27.

¹⁰⁰² Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 10-13.

priestly personalities.”¹⁰⁰³ Through this programme Fr. Kentenich thought on one side he emphasized the independency in striving towards self-education, on the other side he emphasized our dependency on Mary for her help. Fr. Kentenich described this later as the Pre-Founding Document. The statements that he made turned out to be important principles for his entire future activity.¹⁰⁰⁴ The founding of the “*Mission Association*” in January 1913 motivated Fr. Kentenich to establish an organization, which could provide a favourable atmosphere to achieve the goal: “*to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities.*” Being inspired by the magazine, the *Marian Messenger*, which he read in 1913, he came to the conclusion that the structure and the goals of the *Marian Sodality* matched better for his own concept of “*free community*”. Despite heavy objections and difficulties, under the wise guidance of Fr. Kentenich, the long awaited foundation of the *Marian Sodality*¹⁰⁰⁵ was solemnly inaugurated on April 19, 1914 in the Schönstatt Minor Seminary.¹⁰⁰⁶ Fr. Kentenich was very much convinced of the suitability of the *Marian Sodality* for reaching the goal proposed on October 27, 1912, probably because the devotion to Mary assumes an important place and a new significance in the sodality. Among the various goals of the sodality the goal of cultivating a profound personal love of Mary through the consecration is of great significance. In fact this devotion of consecration to Mary serves as the starting point in the sodality. This is very clearly expressed in *Bis Saeculari*, the Apostolic Constitution on the Sodality of Our Lady in the following manner:

“*These sodalities are to be called Sodalities of Our Lady not only because they take their name from the Blessed Virgin Mary, but especially because each sodalist makes a profession of special devotion to the Mother of God and dedicates himself to her by a total consecration, undertaking, though not under the pain of sin, to strive by every means and under the standards of the Blessed Virgin for his own perfection and eternal salvation, as well as for*

¹⁰⁰³ *Pre-founding Document* of October 27, 1912, in: *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, Waukesha WI 1993, P. 14. The original text is: „*Wir wollen lernen, uns unter dem Schutze Mariens selbst zu erziehen zu festen, freien priesterlichen Charakteren.*“ (Vorgründungsurkunde vom 27. Oktober 1912, in: *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 1967, P. 12.)

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich: A life for the Church*, op. cit., Pp. 45-46.

¹⁰⁰⁵ The origin of the Marian Sodality is well described in: Rooney, Richard, L., *The Sodalities of Our Lady*, in: Carol, Juniper, B., (ed.), *Mariology*, Vol. 3, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1957.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 54-73, ; Cf., Pereira, Benjamin, *Marianische Sendung*, op. cit., P. 53, ; *USA-Terziat*, Band III, Pp. 317.

that of others. By this consecration the sodalist binds himself forever to the Blessed Virgin Mary....”¹⁰⁰⁷

The following are the consecration prayers which are used at the admission ceremony in the Sodality. The longer form of the Prayer is composed by St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622).

*“Most Holy Mary, Virgin Mother of God, I (full name), most unworthy though I am to be thy servant, yet touched by thy motherly care for me and longing to serve thee, do, in the presence of my Guardian Angel and all the court of Heaven, choose thee this day to be my queen, my advocate, and my mother, and I firmly purpose to serve thee evermore myself and to do what I can that all may render faithful service to thee. Therefore, most devoted Mother, through the Precious Blood thy Son poured out for me, I beg thee and beseech thee, deign to take me among thy clients and receive me as thy servant forever. Aid me in my every action, and beg for me the grace never, by word or deed or thought, to be displeasing in thy sight and that of thy most holy Son. Think of me, my dearest Mother, and desert me not at the hour of death. Amen.”*¹⁰⁰⁸

The shorter form of the prayer is known as “My Queen, My Mother”, which summarizes the heart of Schönstatt’s spirituality.

*“My Queen, my Mother! I give myself entirely to thee, and to show my devotion to thee I consecrate to thee this day, my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve, Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, guard me, as thy property and possession.”*¹⁰⁰⁹

The above quoted shorter version of the consecration prayer in its modified form is the key prayer used in Schönstatt to renew the Covenant of Love with the Mother Thrice Admirable. A detailed explanation of this prayer will be given in the later part of this chapter.

Fr. Kentenich in his talk at the Founding of the Sodality on April 19, 1914, clearly states the importance of Marian sodality and the Marian devotion for the realization of the goal of October 27, 1912 in the following manner:

“We have tried to grasp the aim and essence of the sodality.... In it we found an excellent means for the realization of our youthful

¹⁰⁰⁷ Pius XII, *Apostolic Constitution on the Sodality of Our Lady*, The Press Apostolate Section of the Assumption Sodality, Tuticorin, 1949, P. 13.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Act of Consecration by St. Francis de Sales*, in: <http://www.catholictradition.org/Mary/consecration2.htm>, 11.11.13.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Consecration to Mary*, in: <http://www.catholictradition.org/Children/o-mary.htm>, 11.11.13.

ideals, for the most perfect, swift, and sure attainment of the goal of our educational institution. In the sodality we have found Jesus and Mary. (...) My dear sodalists, the Sodality presents us with Mary. (...) Just as the picture of Mary over the altar not only decorates our [house] chapel, but also dominates all its forms, so should Mary not merely assume some random position in the temple of the sodality, even if it be an outstanding one, but should rule there with unlimited authority and power. This is how we find Mary in the Sodality. And that is how it must be. If the Marian Sodality is to have any justification for its existence, then its deepest essence must absolutely include a special, an outstanding Marian devotion. (...) By entering the Marian Sodality, we solemnly and publicly obligate ourselves – on our own initiative – to work toward the realization of this ideal under the protection and with the help of Mary.”¹⁰¹⁰

Fr. Kentenich further explained to the boys in his talk that through their admission to the Sodality they have walked into the school of Mary’s education on their own free will. He clearly formulated the purpose of the Sodality as: “*Per Mariam ad Jesum*: through Mary to Jesus”.¹⁰¹¹ He stated the final aim of the Sodality in the following manner:

*“The final aim of our Sodality is not Mary, but Our Lord. We unreservedly consecrate ourselves to the most Blessed Virgin, so that she leads us to her Divine Son just as she leads the balking and hesitant [child] John [the Baptist] to him in the picture with gentle force. Per Mariam ad Jesum! Through Mary to Jesus! That is the shortest summary of the entire aim of the Sodality. Just as Mary brought Christ to us, so does she lead us to Christ, and she knows no other, no greater care than to give us the deepest possible union with him....”*¹⁰¹²

¹⁰¹⁰ Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 76, 77, 80. The original text is: „Wir fanden in ihr ein ausgezeichnetes Mittel, um unsere jugendlichen Ideale zu verwirklichen, um den Zweck unserer hiesigen Erziehungsanstalt möglichst vollkommen, schnell und sicher zu erreichen. Wir fanden und finden in der Kongregation Jesus und Maria.... Die Kongregation gibt uns Maria.... Wie das Altarbild, das Marienbild, die Kapelle nicht nur schmückt, sondern sie in aller Form beherrscht, so soll Maria in dem Tempel der Kongregation, in dem Heiligtum unseres Herzens nicht eine, wenn auch hervorragende Stelle einnehmen, nein, sie muß darin herrschen mit unumschränkter Gewalt. In diesem Sinne finden wir Maria in der Kongregation. Und so muß es sein. Wenn die Marianische Kongregation irgendwie Existenzberechtigung haben soll, dann gehört zu ihrem innersten Wesen unbedingt eine ganz besondere, eine ausgezeichnete Marienverehrung. Dadurch, daß wir in die Marianische Kongregation eintreten, verpflichten wir uns feierlich und öffentlich aus freien Stücken, soviel an uns liegt, unter dem Schutze und mit der Hilfe Mariens an der Verwirklichung dieses Ideals zu arbeiten.“ (Kastner, Ferdinand, *Unter dem Schutze Mariens*, op. cit., Pp. 204, 206, 209.)

¹⁰¹¹ Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich: A life for the Church*, op. cit., P. 50.

¹⁰¹² Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., P. 79. The original text is: „So ist auch der letzte Zweck der Kongregation nicht Maria, sondern der Heiland. Wir weihen uns ohne Rückhalt der allerseligsten Jungfrau, damit sie uns zu ihrem göttlichen Sohne führe, geradeso wie sie hier auf dem Bilde mit sanfter Gewalt den zagenden und zögernden Johannes zu ihm führt. Per Mariam ad Jesum! Durch Maria zu Jesus! Das ist der ganze Zweck der Kongregation auf die kürzeste Formel gebracht. Wie Maria den Heiland zu uns gebracht, so bringt sie auch uns zum Heiland, und sie kennt keine

The foundation of the Marian Sodality was a peak experience for the boys and the realization of the programme of self-education benefitted from the structure and the Marian devotion of the Marian Sodality. Very soon the Sodality began to flourish and started to bear fruit in the lives of the young sodalists. A new shift emerged in the life of the boys and in the life of Fr. Kentenich during May 1914 through a great Marian fervor. Fr. Kentenich gave a series of talks on Mary on Sundays which were accompanied by a short Marian devotion. These talks fostered not only their love for Mary but also their religious spirit. There was a radical improvement in the field of spiritual life. The accent now was not just education to freedom and character formation but also on moral and religious life.¹⁰¹³ Fr. Kentenich makes a clear statement about this in his answer to Father Ferdinand Kastner in the 1930s where he says:

*“During the conferences in May something awakened in the hearts of the sodalists which had refused to awaken before: a tender receptiveness to things moral and religious. And this overcame difficulties which he had not previously been able to overcome. Things surfaced which really shape the heart. And [he said] that the educational value of love for Mary dawned on him at that time, and that every new wave of growing Marian love sets in motion a new receptivity for the other moral values.”*¹⁰¹⁴

The above observation of Fr. Kentenich clearly shows us the radical and authentic shift in the life of the young sodalists through the impact of the Marian devotion and through the talks. This impact in the life of the sodalists also caused a deeper impact in the life of Fr. Kentenich concerning his Marian devotion. He clearly states this in the following manner:

“I included devotion to Mary because it was essential to the Marian Sodality...When the boys asked [in March-April 1914]: What should we do now? I still know very well that I wrote down, among other things, ‘Just not too much devotion to Mary.’ Then came May, and with it a total turn-around. I saw what a grace-filled effect Marian devotion had on the boys and so I became a devotee of Mary myself. Afterwards everything grew out of the

andere keine größere Sorge, als uns in der innigsten Verbindung mit ihm zu erhalten...“ (Kastner, Ferdinand, *Unter dem Schutze Mariens*, op. cit., P. 208.)

¹⁰¹³ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 85-87.

¹⁰¹⁴ Fr. Ferdinand Kastner, talk at 1953 October Week recalling earlier conversations with Fr. Kentenich: *Marianisches Gründungsjahr*, p. 43, as cited in: Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., P. 87.

devotion to Mary.... I myself grew spiritually together with my boys."¹⁰¹⁵

Thus from May 1914 Fr. Kentenich began to emphasize more on Marian devotion than on the self-sanctification. This shift which he experienced in the Marian Sodality shaped his image of Mary gradually and this in turn played an important role in the history of the Schönstatt Family.¹⁰¹⁶

The Pre-Founding Document with its unique programme led to the precedence of the Marian devotion. This in turn reached its significant height through the establishment of the Marian Sodality. From every Marian Sodality it was expected that it should have its own meeting place like a chapel or an oratory etc. Fr. Kentenich found neither the house chapel nor the infirmary chapel in the New House fitting for their meetings. He was of the opinion that the young sodalists should have room and space, which should be exclusively of their own, so that they could express themselves freely in an original manner, so that privacy is safe-guarded in their personal activities. Therefore he approached his provincial Fr. Kolb and requested him to place the old St. Michael's Chapel¹⁰¹⁷ ("the so-called little Chapel") in the

¹⁰¹⁵ Priestertagung 1927, p. 12, as cited in: Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., P. 86.

¹⁰¹⁶ In one of his talks in the 1960s Fr. Kentenich says that the very fact that we have subsequently taken up into the family the image of Mary and the Marian devotion of the Marian Sodality points out to the underlying factor that we have emerged from the Marian Sodality. In his own words: „Wenn wir so zurückschauen, was damals alles vorausging, ehe Schönstatt entstand, dann muß ich hinweisen auf die Marianische Kongregation. Die Marianische Kongregation hat seit Jahrhunderten ein Marienbild mitgebracht; (das) ist im Kerne das Marienbild. Da sehen Sie, daß dieses Marienbild - Stellung der Gottesmutter zu uns, Triebkräfte der Marienverehrung für Formung des inneren Lebens, für Erziehung - daß das Gott weiß wie alt ist.... Sehen Sie, was ich jetzt darstellen müßte: die Marienverehrung der Marianischen Kongregation, das hätte den großen Vorteil, daß damit nachgewiesen ist, wie weit auch dieser Strom zurückgreift, Jahrhunderte hinauf zurückgreift. Daß wir in die Familie nachher mit hineingenommen haben die Marienverehrung der Marianischen Kongregation, ist ja dadurch schon bewiesen und als selbstverständlich empfunden, daß wir aus der Marianischen Kongregation hervorgegangen sind.“ (*Desiderio Desideravi*, Band I, Pp. 200-201).

¹⁰¹⁷ The little chapel stood on the foundations of a chapel built in the old cloister compound before 1226. It was a small cemetery dedicated to St. Michael, patron of the departed souls. It had the accommodation capacity for about 25 worshipers and was mainly used for cemetery functions, though for many years starting in 1319 Mass was celebrated there daily. In 1636 both the cloister and the little chapel were destroyed through the Swedes. The old cemetery chapel was rebuilt by 1681, again in the typical Rhineland style. One piece of the altar made in 1681 has survived to the present, namely an ornately carved piece which served as communion rail in 1914 and in 1934 was integrated into the present altar in the Shrine of the Mother Thrice Admirable. In 1813-14 the German troops probably used the chapel as a storeroom. In the mid-1800s, a religious order called Schönstatt made its home again (the Grey Sisters from Switzerland), but in 1889 were evicted by the Prussian government in keeping with its Kulturkampf policies. Then a Mr. Karl Dorsemagen purchased the house, the St. Michael's chapel and its grounds, and turned it into a "little paradise" for his wife and children. This wonderfully Catholic family honored the Blessed Mother in the old chapel by placing a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes on the altar. But when the family had to sell the property in 1901, they took the statue with them. With the Pallottine acquisition of the property in 1901, the chapel's first function was to serve as house chapel. In the following years it continued to function as house chapel for the school (the Old House). But after the New House opened in 1912, the former cemetery chapel became

valley below the school at the disposal of the newly founded Marian Sodality. In July 1914 Fr. Kolb approved the request of Fr. Kentenich and from then onwards the young sodalists started to take roots in this small chapel, trying to make it their spiritual home. The local attachment to the Shrine was one of the key elements in realizing the goal of October 27, 1912.¹⁰¹⁸

The leading idea that motivated Fr. Kentenich to choose the little chapel was education. Through the gift of the chapel for the Marian Sodality the eye of faith of Fr. Kentenich started perceiving that the Divine Providence was intending to do something in that place. As a confirmation to his providential perception something very important happened in the life of Fr. Kentenich in that same month.

In the very same month of July 1914, during which the little Chapel was given to the sodalists, Fr. Kentenich happened to read an article in the July 18 edition of the *“Allgemeine Rundschau”*, a Munich Catholic weekly newspaper, written by a Capuchin Father Cyprian Fröhlich about the emergence of a pilgrimage place in a small valley called *Valle di Pompeii* at the foot of Mount Vesuvius near Naples in Italy in 1872. It emerged through the initiative and selfless work of an Italian lawyer called Bartolo Longo. The content of the article was a mind-blowing one for Fr. Kentenich and it had a great impact on him. The article inspired Fr. Kentenich to a great extent that after reading it a series of questions emerged in his mind. One important question which kindled his mind was: Does Divine Providence expects me to do something similar to that of what has happened in *Valle di Pompeii*?¹⁰¹⁹ To understand the mind and intention of Fr. Kentenich in posing such a question, it is necessary at this point of our discussion to briefly highlight the origin of the place of pilgrimage according to Father Fröhlich. Father Fröhlich explains this in the following manner:

“Bartolo Longo was, as he admits and writes himself, “a stubborn materialist and sinner” for 30 years. But he was and is a very talented man, one of the great jurists of Italy, and in a talented man

a storage place for the garden tools. Of the present articles in the Shrine of Our Lady in Schönstatt, only the statue of St. Michael and the above mentioned communion rail were present on October 18, 1914. As indicated, the communion rail was built into the present baroque-style altar in 1934. St. Michael’s original place in the center on the simple wooden altar was changed in April 1915 when the MTA picture was installed: namely to his familiar post on the left. (Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 90-91). See also: Hug, Heinrich, *[Welt]geschichte eines Heiligtums*, Textband, Patris-Verlag, 2003, Pp. 20-33.

¹⁰¹⁸ Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich: A life for the Church*, op. cit., Pp. 51-52.

¹⁰¹⁹ Cf., Ibid., P. 52, ; Cf., *USA-Terziat*, Band III, P. 317.

*God's graces can go to work. In October 1872 he was wandering the ruins of Pompeii and contemplating how he could make up for his sins and rediscover peace of heart. He suddenly heard an inner voice such as we have all heard, a voice of good will: "If you want to find peace, then spread the devotion to my Rosary; for whoever promotes the Rosary can never perish." What did this great unbeliever and materialist do? What the two greatest geniuses Saul and Augustine had done before him and thousands with them: He fell to his knees in tears and sobs – and prayed. From this voluntary dying-to-self there arose, like a phoenix from the ashes, a whole world full of life which powerfully overshadowed the previous life of the neighboring city of death. A pilgrimage place and a city for poor children came into existence, which give earthly life to thousands of poor and supernatural life to millions throughout the world. A million pilgrims come to Valle di Pompeii each year from all over the world, sometimes 50,000 on a single feast day. How did that all happen? Yes, that's the miracle of it all. If the Madonna di Pompeii had not worked irrefutable miracles as described in the booklet "The Place of Grace of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Valle di Pompeii," the greatest miracle would be that an unknown lawyer after 71 years in a modern Italy could found a place of pilgrimage on the ruins of a pagan city."*¹⁰²⁰

This message was a great source of inspiration for Fr. Kentenich to take the bold decision of calling upon the extraordinary divine force to form the little Chapel of the Marian Sodality into a place of grace. What inspired him was: *Valle di Pompeii* emerged as a pilgrimage place not through an extraordinary divine intervention but through an ordinary human initiative. It came into existence through the initiative and selfless work of an ordinary human being who was inspired by the Divine Providence and supported by Our Lady. But he arrived at this decision after a period of great inner struggle in discovering the will of God. It was a great struggle because on one side Fr. Kentenich saw the growing influence of Mary's motherly power and wisdom in the education of the sodalists since October 27, 1912 until the gift of the small chapel, which was placed at their disposal to exercise their Marian devotion. On the other side there was the outbreak of World War I, which foreshadowed the danger of wiping all their efforts in realizing the ideal of "firm, free, priestly character". He was very convinced that Mary will continue her motherly task in educating the young hearts even in the unusual circumstances of war. It was in moments of such inner dilemma that Fr. Kentenich felt strongly within himself that God is speaking to him through the newspaper article to take the big risk

¹⁰²⁰ Fr. Cyprian Fröhlich, *Allgemeine Rundschau*, Vol. 11, No. 29, p. 521ff; reprint: FRÖHLICH, as cited in: Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 94-95, ; See also: Fröhlich, Cyprian, P., *Auf einer Totenstadt eine Stadt des Lebens*, in: REGNUM 3, I, 1968, Pp. 133-138.

of inviting Mary with a *gentle force* to reside in the Shrine and to transform it into a place of grace not only for the sodalists but also even beyond.¹⁰²¹ The following statements of Fr. Kentenich would make us clear to understand his inner struggle in making this bold decision:

“It will interest you to know how I personally hit upon creating a pilgrimage chapel here. At that time I chanced upon a copy of the ‘Allgemeine Rundschau’. It contained a report about an Advocate in Italy who had committed his entire life and all his abilities to a place of pilgrimage. Now you have to understand my character. I was completely at the service of the young people, I knew no other task. I now saw: He gave himself completely for a place of pilgrimage. I also saw that our young people had to be educated to carry out a really great task. Now we had the little chapel. Can you understand how the idea arose: Must we not try to draw the Mother of God down to this little chapel? The boys should do this by their own lives of sacrifice.... The Blessed Mother should be drawn down, not merely to be there for us, but for all the time to come and for a very great work. Then the Blessed Mother would be able to give great things to all who come here.”¹⁰²²

“Now you will probably ask: How did I arrive at such an idea that Our Lady should work from just this point of view?.... Just after the war had broken out, I had read an article – it was a very short one – which told of a convert called Bartolo Longo in Italy.... I always try to lead everything I see or hear to the question: What does God wish to say to me? You know that I had a very strong urge to educate. The second point was the grave danger – the World War had broken out in August 1914. How was I to educate the boys and lead them towards self-education? What dangers would they not have to face? Can you understand that, according to my way of thinking, I said to myself: If one can truly draw Our Lady down in the way described, why should not I, why should not we do the same? However, it was not my intention that miracles in the physical sphere should take place, but that Our Lady should show

¹⁰²¹ Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich: A life for the Church*, op. cit., Pp. 52-54.

¹⁰²² Kentenich, Joseph, *Tagung für Bundespriester von 13-17 January 1935*, in Schönstatt, Manuscript, P. 5, (translated by Mary Cole). (From now on this reference will be mentioned as *Tagung für Bundespriester*). The original text is: „Es wird Sie interessieren, wie ich persönlich dazu kam, hier ein Wallfahrtskapellchen zu schaffen. Damals las ich zufällig in der Allgem. Rundschau: Es wurde berichtet von einem Advokaten in Italien, der seine ganzen Lebenskräfte hergegeben für einen Wallfahrtsplatz. Jetzt müssen Sie meine Art einmal verstehen. Ich war so ganz da der Jugend zu dienen, kannte keine andere Aufgabe. Nun sah ich: Der hat sich hingegeben für einen Wallfahrtsort, und ich sah auch: Unsere Jungen müssen für eine ganz große Aufgabe erzogen werden. Nun hatten wir das Kapellchen. Verstehen Sie, wie da der ganze Gedanke kam: Mußten wir nicht suchen, die Gottesmutter in das Kapellchen herabzuziehen? Die Jungen sollten das selber tun durch ihr eigenes Opferleben.... Die Gottesmutter sollte herabgezogen werden, aber nicht nur um hier zu sein für uns, sondern für alle kommenden Zeiten sollte es ein gar großes Werk sein.“

herself as the great educator and work miracles of education, of spiritual transformation.”¹⁰²³

This was the hardest decision taken by Fr. Kentenich because it was a hard struggle for him for two reasons. Firstly it was a groping in the darkness, tapping here and there trying to discern the will of Divine Providence through this article. Secondly there was a danger that one might understand the entire thing as a sophisticated and refined plan of Fr. Kentenich. He was convinced that it was not his plan but the will of the Divine Providence. Therefore it was a great risk for him to draft such a plan.¹⁰²⁴ The voice of the God through the various events of his life and his theological reflections gave him an unshakeable confidence to take a leap of faith in making the decision. He firmly believed that:

*“If the Blessed Mother allowed herself to be drawn down to us here to take the education of the young men in hand, we would have three things: a place of grace, a place where the Blessed Mother is uniquely at work as an educator, and a place of pilgrimage where self-education would have an essential part to play. The programme of self-education proclaimed in 1912 would remain.”*¹⁰²⁵

This firm belief motivated him to present to the young sodalists his daring and secret idea:

*“So I gave the talk, which has gone down in Schönstatt’s history as the Founding Document, the title: Acceleration of our self-education and hence the transformation of our Chapel into a pilgrimage Chapel.”*¹⁰²⁶

¹⁰²³ HOME SHRINE, p. 11, as cited in: Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 95-96.

¹⁰²⁴ Cf., *USA-Terziat*, Band III, P. 317. The original text is: „Verstehen Sie, was ich möchte?... Krieg ist ausgebrochen, dann fallen mir wieder zwei Schriftchen in die Hand. Zunächst eine Schrift, (ein) Artikel in der „Allgemeinen Rundschau“. Da, wo der Bartolo(meo de) Longo drüben in Italien den Wallfahrtsort, den Gnadenort gegründet hat. Natürlich, das ist eigenartig, daß mir jetzt auch der Gedanke kommt, ob ich nicht etwas Ähnliches auch versuchen sollte. Hier müssen Sie bloß heraushören die kleinen äußeren Gelegenheiten, durch die das alles geworden. Ich muß mich also immer dagegen wehren, wenn jemand sagt, das sei ein ausgeklügelter Plan von Anfang an gewesen. Beileibe nicht! (Das) spüren Sie ja, wie das war. Das ist immer -. Und das ist ja wohl das, was uns auch persönlich Ehrfurcht einjagen und Ehrfurcht schenken könnte und sollte vor dem ganzen Werk, aus der Überzeugung heraus: Das ist nicht ausgeklügelt, beileibe nicht. Da ist immer bloß ein Tasten, und zwar immer ein Tasten im Dunkeln. Es geht immer ein Stückchen weiter. (Das) müssen Sie mal überlegen. Das war an sich ja doch wohl ein Wagnis, daraufhin den Plan zu entwerfen: (die) Gottesmutter soll sich hier niederlassen und von hier die ganze Erziehung in die Hand nehmen!“

¹⁰²⁵ Wolf, Peter, (ed.), *The Shrine Source of Life: Selected Texts from Fr Joseph Kentenich*, Schoenstatt Editions USA, 2011, P. 27. (An excerpt from the talk given by Fr. Kentenich during the Federation Conference on December 28, 1950)

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid.

VI.5.1. The Founding Act known as the Covenant of Love

Around middle of October the students returned from the summer holidays and the first Sunday class began on October 18, 1914 at five o' clock in the afternoon in the old St. Michael's chapel. Both the sodalists and the new candidates (approximately more than 50 students) were gathered in the old chapel to hear Fr. Kentenich's talk. With great boldness Fr. Kentenich delivered his talk containing his secret idea to transform the little old chapel, wherein they were gathered, into a place of pilgrimage, which further develops into a new movement for the Church. Here below is the core content of his talk which highlights his secret idea.¹⁰²⁷

*"... if you want to know the reason for this wish, I must tell you of a favorite and [up to now] secret idea of mine. When St. Peter saw the glory of God on Tabor, he called out with delight, "It is good for us to be here. Let us build three tents here" (Mt 17:4). These words come to my mind again and again. And I have often asked myself: Would it not be possible for our little sodality chapel to likewise become for us the Tabor on which the glory of Mary would be revealed? Undoubtedly, we could not accomplish a greater apostolic deed nor leave our successors a more precious legacy than to urge our Lady and Queen to erect her throne here in a special way, to distribute her treasures, and to work miracles of grace. You gather what I am aiming at: I would like to make this place a place of pilgrimage, a place of grace for our house and for the whole German province, and perhaps even further afield. All those who come here to pray shall experience the glory of Mary and confess: "It is good for us to be here. Here we will build our tents, here our favorite place." A bold thought, nearly too bold for the public, but not too bold for you. How often in world history have not small and insignificant beginnings been the source of great and greatest accomplishments? Why could that not also hold true in our case? Whoever knows the history of our sodality will have no trouble believing that Divine Providence has something special in store for it."*¹⁰²⁸

"To me it is as if at this moment, here in the old chapel of St. Michael, Our Lady were speaking to us through the mouth of the holy archangel: Do not worry about the fulfillment of your desire. Ego diligentes me diligo. I love those who love me [Prv 8:17]. Prove to me first that you really love me, that you take your resolution seriously. Just now you have the best opportunity to do so. (...) According to the plan of Divine Providence, this World War with its mighty incentives is meant to be an extraordinary help for you in the work of your self-sanctification. This sanctification I

¹⁰²⁷ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 54-55, ; Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., P. 97.

¹⁰²⁸ *The First Founding Document October 18, 1914*, in: Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., Pp. 30-31, ; *Erste Gründungsurkunde 18. Oktober 1914*, in: Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., Pp. 23-24, (my emphasis).

*demand of you. (....) Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace.*¹⁰²⁹ *By fulfilling your duties faithfully and conscientiously and through an ardent life of prayer, earn many merits and place them at my disposal. Then it will please me to dwell in your midst and dispense gifts and graces in abundance. Then from here I will draw youthful hearts to myself, and I will educate them to become useful instruments in my hand.*"¹⁰³⁰

These excerpts from the talk of Fr. Kentenich indicate very clearly the mutual give and take principle between Mary and the boys. It highlights the promises, which Mary assures and the demands, which she makes on the part of the sodality members. Herein lies the foundation of the mutual Covenant of Love, namely, the covenantal character. Generally speaking, a covenant is much more than a mere agreement between two parties. It implies mutual promises and obligations based on loyalty and love. This is exactly what the following excerpt from the talk of Fr. Kentenich highlights.

Fr. Kentenich in his talks on 21 and 28 October, 1963 to the couples in Milwaukee summarizes the content of the Founding Document into "six promises" and "six demands" to illustrate the reciprocal or the mutual character of the Founding Act. The "six promises of Mary are: 1. *"I gladly take up my abode here."* 2. *"To distribute plentiful gifts and graces."* 3. *"I will draw youthful hearts to myself."* 4. *"I will educate them."* 5. *"To become useful instruments."* 6. *"In my hand."*"¹⁰³¹ The six demands asked of us, her covenant partners, by Mary are:

"1. "Prove first by your deeds that you really love me." 2. "Increase your striving to the highest degree." 3. "This sanctification I demand of you." 4. "Diligently bring me

¹⁰²⁹ In 1919's version of the Founding Document, published in the MTA magazine, our Father introduces the term "capital of grace". The term "capital of grace" is understood by Fr. Kentenich as follows: *"We understand these contributions as our good works, whose merits we humbly and chivalrously place at the disposal of the Mother of God, so that, as the Suppliant Omnipotence, she may inwardly transform as many people as possible from here and help to educate them to become mature and active apostles."* (Kentenich, Joseph, *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, (Herausgegeben von Pater Günther M. Boll), Patris Verlag, 1974, Pp. 47-48, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as: *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*).

¹⁰³⁰ *The First Founding Document October 18, 1914*, in: *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, op. cit., Pp. 32, 34, ; *Erste Gründungsurkunde 18. Oktober 1914*, in: *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., Pp. 26-27. The ending part of this text is personally edited by Fr. Kentenich for the first publication of this talk in the "MTA Magazine" (Vol. IV, p. 59-61), June 15, 1919. This is the most quoted official text.

¹⁰³¹ Cf., Locher, Peter/Niehaus, Jonathan/Unkel, Hans-Werner/Vautier, Paul, (compilers & eds.), *Kentenich Reader: Meeting our Father*, Vol. 1, (translated by Mary Cole), Schönstatt Fathers International, 2008, Pp. 115-117, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *Kentenich Reader*).

*contributions to the capital of grace.” 5. “Fulfill your duties faithfully.” 6. “Pray fervently.”*¹⁰³²

The students gathered in the old chapel accepted the promises and demands of Our Lady as proposed through their spiritual director, Fr. Kentenich. Slowly the sodalists began to make the secret idea of Fr. Kentenich their own.¹⁰³³

This central act, which manifests the mutual acceptance by both the parties, made in the old chapel on October 18, 1914 is the consecration to Mary made by sodalists together with their spiritual director¹⁰³⁴ in the shrine and it is officially

¹⁰³² Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 51.

¹⁰³³ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 104-105.

¹⁰³⁴ It has to be noted that when the Covenant of Love was made on October 18th 1914, there was no picture of Blessed Mother in the old chapel. The first image of Mary used in the chapel was a small statue of Immaculate Heart of Mary. The present picture of Our Lady arrived in Schönstatt on 2nd April 1915 and it was installed in the chapel on April 11th during the same year. This picture was given by Father Huggle, a former Jesuit and who was one of the teachers in the school at that time. It was a painting of Madonna and Child by the Italian painter Luigi Crosio (1835-1915) in 1898 for a Swiss printing house (the Künzli Brothers). This printing house marketed the picture of Madonna and Child under the title “Refuge of Sinners.” The picture was not at all the liking of the sodalists and their preference was for the image of Immaculate Conception. Since there was no other picture available at that time, they had to accept this gift. Fr. Kentenich however carried everything what he said into that picture and in due course of time, the sodalists were able to associate their personal sentiments with the picture. (Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., Pp. 112-115.); Fr. Kentenich in his conference to the Federation Priests in 1935 explains this in the following manner: „Nachdem wir das Kapellchen schon längere Zeit hatten, dachte ich: Das geht so nicht. Wir müssen doch irgendetwas haben, ein Bild oder eine Statue.... Da war ein Professor bei uns, Huggle, ein ausgetretener Jesuit. Ich saß bei Tisch neben ihm. Wir sprachen einmal darüber. Da sagte er: Ich habe da irgendwo ein Bild gefunden. Vielleicht könnte man das einmal erwerben. Es wird zugesagt. Das Bild wird von ihm geschenkt. Das Paket kommt an, wird ausgepackt. Und ich weiß noch gut, daß das Bild zuerst uns ganz und gar nicht gefallen, aber weil wir gar nichts anderes hatten, so ist das Bild aufgehängt worden. Es ist heimisch geworden, weil ich alles, was ich sage, in das Bild hineingetragen habe. Das Bild an sich ist also nicht das Primäre, es ist auch nicht Ausdruck der Geschmacksrichtung der damaligen Zeit.“ (Tagung für Bundespriester, P. 7.); The picture was further not honoured under the same original title “Refuge of Sinners” instead the First Sodalists chose *Mater ter admirabilis* (MTA) as the title for the image of Mary. The title was inspired by the story of the “Marian Colloquium,” a special form of the Marian Sodality, which was called into life by Father Jacob Rem, a Jesuit Priest, which flourished greatly in Ingolstadt, Germany since 1600. It created a lasting impact towards the renewal of the Church even far beyond Ingolstadt, in the whole region of south Germany. This inspiration came to Fr. Kentenich while reading the book written by a Jesuit Father Franz Hattler (Hattler, Franz, *Der ehrwürdige P. Jakob Rem aus der Gesellschaft Jesu und seine Marienconferenz*, Nationale Verlagsanstalt (früher G.J. Manz), Regensburg, 1896.). Fr. Kentenich passed on the book to his sodalists. The way the Ingolstadt sodalist group worked to instill faith and apostolic fervor in many generations of leaders in Southern Germany inspired the Schönstatt sodalists to a great extent and they wished that their efforts in their strivings towards self-sanctification, which they bring as their contributions to Mary, should also have the same effect not only for the whole Church but also for the world! Since then they began to speak about the “Ingolstadt- Schönstatt Parallel” and based on the picture of grace in Ingolstadt they gave their picture of Mary the same title as: “Mother Thrice Admirable.” However it is interesting to note that the Schönstatt sodalists took only the title from Ingolstadt and not the picture of Our Lady from Ingolstadt. (Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., Pp. 56-57, ; Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., Pp. 216-217, ; Amberger, Otto, *Heute Gott erfahren: Praxis des Vorsehungsglaubens*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 2002, P. 14, ; Cf., Amberger, Otto, *400 Jahre Dreimal Wunderbare Mutter Parallele Ingolstadt Schönstatt- Schönstatt Ingolstadt*, in: REGNUM 38, III, 2004, Pp. 126-127, ; Cf., Haub, Rita, *Pater Jakob Rem und die Gesellschaft Jesu*, in: Haub, Rita/Vollnhals, Isidor, (eds.), *Pater Jakob Rem SJ: 400 Jahre Dreimal Wunderbare Mutter in*

termed as the “*Covenant of Love*”. The old chapel is from then on seen as the place of the covenant, which later became the home, the well-spring and the place of pilgrimage of grace for the entire Schönstatt Movement. Fr. Menningen expresses the whole process in a nutshell:

“Through reflection in faith it was recognized in later years that what had come about through Father Kentenich’s talk in the meeting of 18 October 1914 in the old St Michael’s chapel was something which is naturally and fundamentally Christian: a covenant. Our Lady made an offer through the spiritual director and the boys accepted the offer. They declared themselves ready to fulfill the necessary conditions. However, since the covenant had arisen in complete freedom on both sides, it was called a covenant of love. It was nothing other than an original, tangible form of the New Testament covenant of salvation. Its originality was of a personal and local nature: the covenant was made between Our Lady and the incipient Schönstatt Movement as represented by the

Ingolstadt, Kath. Münsterpfarramt, Ingolstadt, 2004, Pp. 14-16, ; Kentenich Reader, Vol. 1, Pp. 109-110.). Fr. Kentenich explains through the following texts, how they arrived at the title Mater ter Admirabilis in the following manner: „Das Heiligtum ist der Dreimal Wunderbaren Mutter geweiht. Wie es dazu kam?... Diesmal durch ein Buch von Hattler über das Colloquium Marianum in Ingolstadt, das uns in den ersten Monaten in die Hand fiel. Es berichtet von einem Elitekreis, der sich in Ingolstadt unter Leitung von Pater Rem gebildet, der sich ganz der Gottesmutter unter dem Titel der Dreimal Wunderbaren Mutter geweiht und sehr segensreich am Anfang der Neuzeit für Erneuerung Süddeutschlands gewirkt hat. Die Erkenntnis machte uns abermals aufmerksam, wieviel vom kleinsten Kreise ausgehen kann, wenn Gottes Plan dahintersteckt; sie gab uns den Mut, den Radius der erziehlichen Tätigkeit der lieben Gottesmutter von Schönstatt aus recht weit zu ziehen ... Was Ingolstadt damals für Süddeutschland war, zu dem möge die Gottesmutter heute Schönstatt machen: zur Quelle der Erneuerung für Deutschland, ja für die ganze Welt ... Das war unsere Bitte, unsere Hoffnung. ..Von 1914 bis 1919 lebte die große Welterneuerungsidee Schönstatts unter dem Deckmantel: Parallele IngolstadtSchönstatt.“ (Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts, Pp. 199-201.). „Ein anderer Brief (von P. Kentenich selbst), vom 26.6.16. Also Sie sehen aus allem: Zuerst war das Bild, dann kam auch die Geschichte mit dem Kolloquium Marianum von Ingolstadt. -- Sie fragen vielleicht: Warum haben wir nicht gleich das eigentliche MTA Bild von Ingolstadt gewählt, das im Hause vorhanden war, ich glaube über der Türe zu P. Auer hing es?... Hätten wir das Ingolstädter Bild gewählt, wäre das eine starke, historisch nicht zu rechtfertigende Unterstützung. Dadurch, daß wir ein anderes MTA-Bild haben, ist bewiesen, wie total unabhängig von Ingolstadt unsere ganze Bewegung geworden ist und war. Was Ingolstadt eigentlich dazu tat, ist nur eine Illustration. Es ist unsere Bewegung ein ganz originelles Gewächs. Der zweite Brief nun. Da heißt es: «... Mater ter admirabilis, Dreimal Wunderbare Mutter ist der Titel, unter dem wir sie künftig im Kapellchen verehren.»“ (Tagung für Bundespriester, Pp. 7-8.); Fr. Menningen explains how Fr. Kentenich explained and interpreted the title Mater ter Admirabilis in one of his letters of June 1915: “Perhaps you are in the trenches already? Whatever happens, I am firmly confident that our heavenly Mother will lead all our members who really have a vocation to their goal in spite of the apparent impossibility. We have given her the name Mater Ter Admirabilis, Mother Thrice Admirable. In future we shall venerate her in our little chapel under this title. Without any doubt whatsoever she has shown herself admirable in the life of our sodality, not least in you’. A little later he goes on: ‘She will also Show herself admirable to and in our sodality members in the long holidays. From now on our battle-cry is: ‘Mater Ter Admirabilis, ora pro nobis’.” (Monnerjahn, Engelbert, Joseph Kentenich, op. cit., P. 58.); Thus once the sodalists began to honour the Blessed Mother under the title Mater ter Admirabilis the picture constantly reminded them that she was asking them to help win over the world for Christ. “Fr. Kentenich further interpreted the title on many occasions to highlight important features of Mary and her mission: admirable as Mother of God, Mother of the Redeemer and Mother of the redeemed.” (Schönstatt Spirituality, in: <https://www.schoenstatt.us/about/spirituality>, 18.11.13.)

founder and the members of the Marian sodality. Furthermore the covenant was essentially connected to the place, the former chapel of St Michael, which was destined to become the place of the grace-filled activity of Mary. This covenant of love of 18 October 1914 proved more and more as the years went by to have been Schönstatt's central founding act. It concluded what had been set in motion on 27 October 1912 and become the source of life for the Future development of the Schönstatt Movement."¹⁰³⁵

Thus from the above discussion we get the very clear impression that the Covenant of Love, when compared with the consecration to Mary in the tradition of the Church, is something very original, special and unique to Schönstatt and moreover it is very much connected to the life experiences and discernments of Fr. Kentenich. The uniqueness and the originality of the Covenant of Love are contained in the various elements and therefore let us now discuss in detail its originality by analyzing the various elements and factors, which make it so unique.

VI.5.2. The original birth of the term: Covenant of Love and its implications

At the very outset of our discussion we could straight away raise the question: why is the act of consecration to Mary in Schönstatt called the Covenant of Love and not simply consecration to Mary? The act of consecration to Mary on October 18, 1914 was not termed as the *Covenant of Love* from its very beginning. It had its own birth and development. The Schönstatt consecration was seen right from its very beginning as a form of Marian consecration which was in continuity with the consecration of the Marian Sodality. Therefore it was simply termed as "consecration". Once the sodalists began to honour Mary in the chapel as *Mater Ter Admirabilis* since 1915, the consecration was called as "MTA-consecration" (MTA-Weihe).¹⁰³⁶ However it must be affirmed that right from the very beginning the "MTA-consecration" was understood as a mutual covenant between Mary and those who consecrated themselves to her in the Shrine and therefore the *covenantal character* remained the hallmark of Schönstatt consecration from the very beginning of its founding act. This is very clearly affirmed by Fr. Kentenich in the following statement:

"Die... Gründungsurkunde trägt unverkennbar den Charakter eines Liebesbundes an der Stirne zwischen Schönstatt und der

¹⁰³⁵ Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 56.

¹⁰³⁶ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 47.

Gottesmutter: Schönstatt erklärt sich bereit, aus Liebe Ernst und gewissenhaft nach Heiligkeit zu streben - die Gottesmutter will dafür ihre Liebe dadurch beweisen, dass sie Schönstatt zur Gnadenstätte macht und das Schönstattwerk ins Leben ruft und leitet und beseelt.”¹⁰³⁷

The Marian Congregation considered its consecration to Mary always as a mutual and voluntary contract and the Latin term used in the tradition of the Marian Congregation was *Contractus bilateralis*. Fr. Kentenich says that the notion of *Contractus bilateralis* is not a new invention but it was used to indicate a simple consecration to Mary in the Marian Congregation. He expresses this by saying:

“Der Gedanke des contractus bilateralis darf übrigens nicht als neu und von uns erfunden oder erstmalig angewandt bezeichnet werden. Er ist in den Marianischen Kongregationen gebräuchlich für eine einfache Weihe.”¹⁰³⁸

He further quotes an excerpt from the talk on consecration given by P. Boißl SJ to explain that the consecration formula of the Marian Congregation clearly manifests the notion of *Contractus bilateralis*. He quotes:

“Sie werden während der Aufnahmefeier die Weihe vornehmen. Sie werden dieselbe vor allen, die hier gegenwärtig sind, und vor Ihrem Schutzengel und dem ganzen himmlischen Hofe laut sprechen. Sie werden nicht ein Gelübde machen, nicht unter einer Sünde etwas geloben, aber weihen, widmen, schenken wollen Sie sich ihr. Mit andern Worten: Sie machen einen Kontrakt mit der Mutter Gottes für das ganze Leben.”¹⁰³⁹

Fr. Kentenich affirms that the consecration formula itself serves as a proof for the statement made by P. Boißl.¹⁰⁴⁰ This he explains in his own words in the following manner:

“Die Weiheformel scheidet sich in zwei Teile, die einen bilateralen Vertrag ausdrücken. Im ersten Teil übernimmt der Sodale Maria gegenüber Verpflichtungen auf sich. Als Folgerung daraus erwartet er von Maria im zweiten Teil genannten Schutz.”¹⁰⁴¹

¹⁰³⁷ *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, P. 122, (my emphasis). This is a retrospective statement from 1944.

¹⁰³⁸ *Rechtfertigungsschrift 2 an das Bischöfliche Ordinariat Trier*, in: Kentenich, Pater Joseph, *Fürchte dich nicht - rede nur - schweige nicht: Briefe von Pater Joseph Kentenich im weiteren Umkreis des 31. Mai 1949*, Band V, Manuskript, Schönstatt 1996, P. 1904.

¹⁰³⁹ Präsidialkorrespondenz für marianische Kongregationen, Wien 1928, S. 349-353, as cited in: *Ibid.*, P. 1905.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Cf., *Id.*, P. 1905.

¹⁰⁴¹ Präsidialkorrespondenz, 36, S. 145, as cited in: *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, P. 123.

However the term *Contractus bilateralis* in the Marian Congregation was always understood in the sense of *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus*, which means that both parties - MTA and the *sodalists* - enter into a contract out of free will and out of love. According to Fr. Kentenich it is also the normal understanding in the Moral theology which he expresses by making the following statement:

*“Moraltheologie nennt jede Schenkung einen Kontrakt, freilich einen contractus gratuitus. Handelt es sich um eine beiderseitige Schenkung, spricht sie von einem contractus bilateralis scl. gratuitus.”*¹⁰⁴²

The adjective *gratuitus* indicates that grace is a gift of God.¹⁰⁴³ Fr. Kentenich also affirms that the notion of *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus* is very deeply rooted in the history of the Church. He says: “...dass der Gedanke des *contractus bilateralis gratuitus* in kirchlicher Vergangenheit wurzelt.”¹⁰⁴⁴

Though it is rooted in the tradition of the Church it was very unfortunate that in the 1930s the term *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus* was wrongly understood by certain Church officials, especially by the then Bishop of Limburg, Bishop Antonius Hilfrich. In 1934/1935 he presented critical remarks on the formula “*Contractus bilateralis*” and requested the Bishop of Trier to look into the case and to bring it before the Holy Office. Fr. Kentenich expresses this in the following manner:

*“Sehen Sie...das war in den dreißiger Jahren, müßte so etwa 1934-1935 gewesen sein, ist ja an sich ein einschneidendes Jahr - damals, da war so der Senior der dogmatischen Überwachung in Deutschland der Bischof, der damalige Bischof von Limburg. Und der kommt auf einmal so etliche Male nach Schönstatt, sieht sich das an. Damals haben wir das natürlich nicht gewußt, wie und was das war, was das sollte. Das war eigentlich eine Kontrolle. Und der hat dann den Bischof von Trier veranlaßt, er sollte doch die ganze Sache, das ganze Problem Schönstatt dem Heiligen Stuhl, dem Offizium unterbreiten.”*¹⁰⁴⁵

The Bishop of Trier entrusted the whole case to a dogmatic expert Prof. Ignaz Backes, who gave lectures on systematic theology from 1935-1968 in Trier. His main evaluation was on the formula “*Contractus bilateralis*” and in his assessment he proved that such a juridical contract doesn’t exist in Catholic theology. It was immediately obvious to Fr. Kentenich that the dogmatic professor did not look

¹⁰⁴² *Rechtfertigungsschrift 2 an das Bischöfliche Ordinariat Trier*, op. cit., P. 1903.

¹⁰⁴³ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 47.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, P. 124.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band I, Pp. 185-186.

deeply enough into the key notion of *contract*. It was clear to him that the inquiries resulted in misunderstanding *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus* as *Contractus bilateralis onerosus*, which meant that in making the contract with Mary we exercised a kind of gentle-force on Mary to honour our prayers and sacrifices. It gives the impression that the mutual contract is not voluntary but a result of our striving. This sounds like a juridical contract. Thus it was a failure on the part of the Bishop of Trier to understand the *Contractus bilateralis* as some juridical contract and not as a contract made out of love by both the parties. The following statements of Fr. Kentenich clearly state this misunderstanding.

*“Damals wurde dann die Schönstattangelegenheit einem Trierer Zensor übergeben. Das ist derselbe Dogmatiker, der jetzt noch tätig ist drüben. Und der hat dann ein Gutachten ausgefertigt und ist dann besonders gekreist um den contractus bilateralis. Nachgewiesen: Ist ja unmöglich; so etwas gibt es ja doch gar nicht in der katholischen Theologie. Nun war das was Komisches; der hat ja vollständig die Sache übersehen; das wesentliche Wort hat er ganz übersehen: Das ist kein **Rechtsbündnis**. Was ist das für ein Bündnis? Damals haben wir den Ausdruck noch gar nicht einmal so gebraucht: ein **Liebesbündnis**. ”*¹⁰⁴⁶

*“...daß etwa 1935 die erste Auseinandersetzung mit Trier begann, wo Trier nun auf einmal irre wurde und meinte, wir würden die Behauptung aufstellen, wir hätten ein Rechtsbündnis mit dem lieben Gott und der Gottesmutter geschlossen. Also der Begriff contractus bilateralis ist dort falsch aufgefaßt worden. Die haben sofort ergänzt: **contractus bilateralis onerosus**. ”*¹⁰⁴⁷

Therefore it became an urgent need for Fr. Kentenich to explain the real understanding of the term *Contractus bilateralis*. In his vindication against the accusations made by the Bishop of Trier, Fr. Kentenich made it clear that there is a possibility to enter into contract based on love with God and Mary and it has to be understood *only* as *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus* and nothing else. To make his point of view clear, he presents in his vindication letter the following detailed explanation about the consecration from the book “*Im Dienste der Himmelskönigin*”. He quotes:

*“Nichts ist sinniger als die Art und Weise, wie im Augenblick der feierlichen **Weihe** das **gegenseitige Bündnis zwischen Maria und dem Sodalen** zustande kommt, ein Bündnis, das den Höhepunkt des*

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid., P. 186.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Kentenich, Joseph, *P. Joseph Kentenich an seine Pars motrix*, Band 3, Das Jahr 1966, Teil I, Manuskript, Pp. 41-42, (my emphasis).

Kongregationslebens bildet, aber auch das süße Geheimnis seines Adels und seiner Würde... Es soll aber der Vertrag ein vollkommener, gegenseitiger werden. Nicht der Sodale will Maria allein die Hand zum Bündnis entgegenstrecken, auch Maria soll dem Sodalen die Hand reichen zum gegenseitigen Vertrag. Der Sodale ist gleichsam nicht zufrieden damit, seinerseits jene **Wahl**¹⁰⁴⁸ getroffen zu haben, er möchte so gern, daß auch Maria ihrerseits ihn, den Sodalen, zu ihrem Diener, Schützling und Kinde für immer aufnehme. Dann erst ist das Bündnis, aber auch das Glück des Kongreganisten ein vollkommenes! Dann erst kann Gnade um Gnade, Segen um Segen, Freude und Kraft und Trost aus diesem Bündnis strömen, wenn der Sodale zu Maria sagen kann: Siehe, meine Mutter! Und Maria zum Sodalen: Siehe, mein Kind! Deshalb verlegt sich der Sodale mit der ganzen Glut eines feurigen Verlangens, mit dem ganzen Eifer kindlicher Sehnsucht auf inniges, stürmisches Bitten. Ich bitte und beschwöre dich bei deiner Liebe, die keine Bitte abschlägt, und bei deiner Milde, die voll Herablassung ist; ich bitte und beschwöre dich bei deinem liebeichsten und mildesten Herzen! - Und jetzt bringt er noch einmal seine Überzeugung zum Ausdruck, die er zu Anfang der Weihe ausgesprochen, daß er ein huldvolles Entgegenkommen der Mutter Gottes **ganz und gar nicht verdient**,¹⁰⁴⁹ daß dasselbe nur eine ganz freie Entschließung, ein **Gnadenakt**¹⁰⁵⁰ Marias sein könne. (...) Noch mehr! Der Sodale nimmt zu einem Mittel die Zuflucht, dem Maria unmöglich widerstehen kann. Er bittet und beschwört die seligste Jungfrau bei etwas, was das Mächtigste und Kraftvollste im Himmel und auf Erden ist. Er beschwört sie beim Blute Jesu Christi! Bei jenem Blute, das Maria in der Stunde fließen sah, als ihrem Mutterherzen die ganze Menschheit vom Heiland anvertraut wurde. Wird Maria es über sich bringen, ein Menschenkind abzuweisen, das sie bei diesem göttlichen Blute beschwört, in besonderer Weise zu ihrem Diener, Schützling und Kinde es anzunehmen? - Verpflichtet sich vor dem Angesichte der Kirche der Sodale zu einem besonderen Dienst Marias, dann hält die Mutter Gottes mit ihrer Zustimmung nicht zurück, dann überträgt sie dem Sodalen das Recht, sie in besonderer Weise seine

¹⁰⁴⁸ Fr. Kantenich speaks about the importance of this *free act* in Schönstatt consecration in the Second Founding Document on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary on October 18, 1939 where he says: "This free election was first made by our family in the Founding Document. (...) The family elected Our Lady to be its Mother, Queen, and Intercessor in a unique way, and the venerable Mother of Our Lord made our little family her favorite creation and occupation. The Founding Document is therefore a voluntary act of mutual choice and self-surrender. Each consecration which has been made over the last twenty-five years, either individually or in community may be seen as a mysterious participation in the Founding Document and consequently a renewal and repetition of this mutual voluntary act of choice and self-surrender. The process therefore becomes understandable by which we have gradually become accustomed to looking on our consecration to the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schönstatt as a freely chosen and freely willed declaration of our special childlike and chivalrous attachment to her for all eternity, but at the same time as a freely chosen and freely willed declaration of her special motherly and queenly attachment to us for all eternity." (Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents, op. cit., Pp. 46-47, my emphasis.)

¹⁰⁴⁹ "Ganz und gar nicht verdient": These words indicate the *gratuitus* aspect of the consecration.

¹⁰⁵⁰ "Der Gnadenakt" once again refers to the *gratuitus* aspect of the consecration. It points out to the *unmerited grace* and the *free gift*.

Herrin, Beschützerin und Mutter zu nennen, Maria selbst aber kennt und übt ihre Pflichten einem solchen Diener, Schützling und Kinde gegenüber. Es sind Mutterpflichten, auf die der Sodale von nun an ein heiliges Anrecht hat!”¹⁰⁵¹

It was the deepest desire of Fr. Kentenich that the Bishop of Trier should understand the Founding Act of the Covenant of Love from its very beginning since October 18, 1914 from this perspective and hence he says:

“Die Schönstattbewegung hat der Gottesmutter ihr Opfern und Beten geschenkt, und die Gottesmutter hat ihr dafür ihren sichtbaren Segen gegeben.... So ist die Parole verständlich: In der Bewegung geschieht nichts ohne uns, aber auch nichts ohne die Gottesmutter.”¹⁰⁵²

The crystallization of the notion of Covenant of Love began after the accusations made against Schönstatt in the year 1935. The statement of Fr. Kentenich may give us a deeper glance into the struggle to present his vindication which paved way to the conception of the term Covenant of Love:

*“Wir haben so bis 1935 eigentlich sehr wenig reflexiv über das Liebesbündnis gesprochen. Das ist dargestellt worden, hat auch gelebt.... Seit der Zeit - es muß 1935, kann auch, ich meine es wäre 1935 gewesen - treten alle diese Dinge ins wache Bewußtsein. (...) Vieles, was in uns lebt, aber nicht reflexiv bewußt lebt und nicht gepflegt wird, ja schon deswegen, weil es fast selbstverständlich ist - jetzt kommt da (jemand); die haben das (angegriffen). Wir haben das immer gelehrt: **Das ist ein contractus bilateralis gratuitus.** (...) Auf einmal wird von der Kirche etwas angefeindet; jetzt auf einmal. Ja, was ist das denn? Ist ja auch wahr, es gibt ja gar, gar kein Bündnis, kein Bündnis; wie kann man denn ein Bündnis schließen mit Gott, nicht? Es war der Fall sofort erledigt, als ich ihm sagte: Ja, Sie müssen unterscheiden: *onerous* und *gratuitus*. Dann zweitens: das ganze Weltgeschehen (sehen)! Es gibt ja einen heilsgeschichtlichen Liebesbund.... Das ist vielfach instinktiv eine konkrete Anwendung letzter Führungsgesetze Gottes.... Ich kann jetzt bloß einen kleinen Ausschnitt machen und sagen: **So ist das Liebesbündnis geworden!**”¹⁰⁵³*

Thus it is very clear from the above discussion that the concept of Covenant of Love was brought to the consciousness of Schönstatt strongly through the arguments and discussions with the Bishop of Trier but above all through the vindications of Fr. Kentenich. But the Latin term used in the tradition of the Marian

¹⁰⁵¹ Sinthern SJ, Im Dienste der Himmelskönigin, Herder 1914, S. 183-188, as cited in:

Rechtfertigungsschrift 2 an das Bischöfliche Ordinariat Trier, op. cit., Pp. 1906-1908, (my emphasis).

¹⁰⁵² *Rechtfertigungsschrift 2 an das Bischöfliche Ordinariat Trier*, op. cit., Pp. 1903-1904.

¹⁰⁵³ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band I, Pp. 205-206, (my emphasis).

Congregation *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus* was used further to refer to the Marian consecration in Schönstatt until 1944. In 1944 Fr. Kentenich used the term “*Covenant of Love*” (*Liebesbündnis*) for Schönstatt’s Marian consecration for the first time when he was in the concentration camp in Dachau from March 13, 1942 to April 6, 1945.¹⁰⁵⁴ For him this term “*Covenant*” was a better word than “*Contract*” because it captures the core principle of the human ability to relate and bond in love with one another. This term expresses more strongly the personal act of self-giving not based on juridical terms and conditions but rather based on true reciprocative love, which binds both the partners. Since then the term “*Covenant of Love*” was used as the official name for the Marian consecration in Schönstatt and it has become one of the most fundamental Schönstatt vocabulary.¹⁰⁵⁵ Though the new term “*Covenant of Love*” was to Fr. Kentenich preferable to the term “*Contract*” he emphasizes that we always should speak about the Covenant of Love only in the context of *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus*.¹⁰⁵⁶ He presents the exact content of the mutual Covenant of Love by analyzing the Founding Document in the following way:

*“Als solches wird die Gründungsurkunde charakterisiert durch die Worte: „Ego diligentes me diligo.“ Das heißt: Wenn ihr mich liebt und mir eure Liebe beweist, stelle ich meine Liebe unter Beweis. Der folgende Text: „Beweist mir erst, dass ihr mich wirklich liebt... dann werde ich mich gerne unter euch niederlassen“, bestimmt den genaueren Inhalt des gegenseitigen Liebesbündnisses.“*¹⁰⁵⁷

¹⁰⁵⁴ Kentenich, Joseph, *Marianische Werkzeugsfrömmigkeit*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 1974, Pp. 55, 227. The original German texts are: „Gott ist ein Gott der Treue, und **das Liebesbündnis**, das er mit uns vor 30 Jahren geschlossen (hat), bricht er nicht.“ (P. 55). „Mit ihnen verstehen wir darunter nach der kirchlichen Überlieferung keinen *contractus bilateralis onerosus*, d. h. keinen beiderseitigen Rechtsvertrag im eigentlichen Sinn des Wortes, sondern einen *contractus bilateralis gratuitus* oder wie die „Worte zur Stunde“ (No. 20, 21) sich ausdrücken – einen **Liebesbund** nennen und füglich sprechen von den sich daraus ergebenden „Liebespflichten“.“ (P. 227), ; Though this word **Liebesbund** was coined by Fr. Kentenich in 1944 to indicate the Marian consecration in Schönstatt, this word appeared already in the letter written by Max Josef Metzger (1887-1944) to Friedrich Heiler in 1938 but outside the context of Marian consecration. He writes: „In gegenseitiger Fühlungnahme dieser in ihrer persönlichen Überzeugung vollständig unangetasteten Gruppen wächst tatsächlich in aller Stille quer durch alle Bekenntnisse hindurch **ein Liebesbund** der von der Einheitssehensucht erfassten und der Vereinigung aller in Christo dienenden Jünger des Herrn.“ (Metzger, Max-Josef, *Brief an Friedrich Heiler vom 23. November 1938*, zit. nach: Ernesti, Jörg, *Ökumene im Dritten Reich*, Paderborn 2007, P. 195.), my emphasis, ; Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 47.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan (ed.), *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality: Texts by Father Joseph Kentenich*, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1992, Pp. 39, 66, from now on will be mentioned as *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Cf., *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, P. 122.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 123.

Further in the Third Founding Document Fr. Kentenich affirms this aspect by saying:

*“Wir leben und streben aus dem Bewußtsein, dass die Weihe ein beiderseitiges Liebesbündnis ist. So steht es ja in der Gründungsurkunde: ...diligentes me diligo... Beweist mir erst, dass ihr mich wirklich liebt, dass es euch ernst ist mit eurem Vorsatze...dann werde ich mich gern hier niederlassen und reichlich Gaben und Gnaden austeilen.”*¹⁰⁵⁸

From the above discussion about the concept of the term “*Covenant of Love*” we understand that the Marian Congregation played a vital role to define Schönstatt’s Marian consecration, by presenting us the idea of “*Covenant of Love*”, namely the mutual and perfect giving of oneself and the giving of self to the other in true love. This is one of the characteristic features of the consecration in Marian Sodalities even though it never became the fundamental and central idea in the Marian Sodalities. There is no problem for Fr. Kentenich to acknowledge the fact that he took up the expression “*Covenant*” from the Marian Congregation but at the same time he never failed to affirm that the understanding of the richness of the content of “*Covenant of Love*” and its concrete application goes far beyond what was alive in the Marian Congregation and that is exactly wherein the originality of the Covenant of Love lies. The following statements of Fr. Kentenich will help us to understand this in a better manner:

*“...das habe ich - den Ausdruck „Bündnis“ - den habe ich von den Kongregationen übernommen. Der lebte in der Kongregation, ist aber nirgendwo Zentralgedanke geworden, nirgendwo. Das müssen Sie deswegen festhalten, damit Sie verstehen: Was wir haben, wurzelt alles in der Tradition, und sehr deutlich in der Tradition. Das ist nur so: Vieles, was so nebenbei lebte, was so nebenbei gelehrt wurde, ist hier zum Zentralgedanken geworden.”*¹⁰⁵⁹

*“...daß wir die Idee der Weihe der Marianischen Kongregation übernommen, aber die Herausstellung dieser Weihe als Liebesbündnis zum Grundton, zur Grundwurzel unseres Lebens gemacht haben.”*¹⁰⁶⁰

“...daß die Marianische Kongregation uns die Idee der Weihe als Liebesbündnis geschenkt hat. (....) Unser Liebesbündnis ist

¹⁰⁵⁸ Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 83.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band I, P. 207.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band II, P. 35.

zunächst eine Konkretisierung, aber eine originelle Konkretisierung des heilsgeschichtlichen Liebesbündnisses.”¹⁰⁶¹

“Die Idee des Liebesbündnisses mit der Gottesmutter ist seit Menschengedenken in der Form des contractus bilateralis gratuitus in der Marianischen Kongregation lebendig. Wir haben sie dort entlehnt, haben sie jedoch, zum Unterschied von der Kongregationspraxis, zur herrschenden Leitidee oder - wie bereits gesagt - zur Grundform unserer Existenz, zu unserer Zielgestalt und Grundkraft gemacht. Wir haben ihr einen originellen Inhalt gegeben, haben sie schöpferisch entfaltet und zu einem wohlgeordneten Erziehungssystem gestaltet.”¹⁰⁶²

The above statements of Fr. Kentenich give us an insight that the Schönstatt consecration is both similar and different at the same time, when compared with the most recognized forms of Marian consecration in the Church like the consecration of the Marian Sodality or with the Grignon consecration.

Commonly speaking we can say that the similarity in all three consecrations lies in the total and mutual gift of self to Mary through the act of consecration. But the above mentioned statements tell us that there is something original and a deeper meaning in the Covenant of Love and therefore we need to plunge now into the real depths of the Covenant of Love to discover and to understand its deeper meaning and its significance.

VI.5.3. The inner spirit and dynamism of the Covenant of Love

Fr. Kentenich in one of his letters to Father Turowski (1894-1959), the General Superior of the Pallottines from 1947-1953, beautifully describes the significance of the Covenant of Love in the history of Schönstatt. He upholds that the first Covenant of Love on October 18, 1914 is the organic starting point of everything that has developed in Schönstatt. The entire Schönstatt structures and its whole spirituality have been intimately formed and permeated by this Covenant of Love, as the following text of Father Kentenich’s letter from 1952-53 indicates:

“A look into our covenant history confirms two important facts. We are already aware of the first one. (...) It deals with the origin and nature of this covenant of love with Schönstatt as a place and as a family... At stake is not, in the first place, a particular idea, clearly grasped and abstractly seen and interpreted. It is rather a completely new process of life in the supernatural order. Because of this it can only be grasped by faith and its charged dynamic is

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid., Pp. 58-59.

¹⁰⁶² LSch 1952, I, P. 89.

constantly repeated and irresistibly seeks to grow in length and breadth, in depth and height. It is a new beginning, a new intervention of God in salvation history, a new fountain of grace and life which unstoppably pours out boundless riches and wants to traverse and transform the world and Church. It is the principle and foundation of the entire Schönstatt Work. Simply stated, it is a new divine initiative and an extraordinary inbreak of grace that, as part of a great divine plan, joins in perfect bipolar unity with the divine initiative and power of grace personified by Pallotti and concludes the founding history of the Apostolatus Catholicus...

The second fact is of similar importance. We owe everything that has developed in the family in terms of organization and customs, vigor and fruitfulness, to the being and activity, unfolding and maturing of this original covenant of love."¹⁰⁶³

The above quoted personal evaluation of Fr. Kentenich about the history of Schönstatt from the perspective of Covenant of Love shows the richness of the spirituality which has emerged from the first founding act. One of the reasons for its richness is that Father Kentenich consciously placed the *Covenant of Love* in the context of salvation history which is essentially a covenant history and a triumph of mutual covenant loyalty.¹⁰⁶⁴ By doing this he affirmed the "*Covenant of Love as Schönstatt's fundamental purpose, form, strength and norm*"¹⁰⁶⁵ and it is "*oriented on the divine covenant of the salvation history*".¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁶³ Turowskibrief 1952/53, as cited by King, Herbert, in: *Marianische Bundesspiritualität: ein Kentenich-Lesebuch*, Schönstatt-Studien, Band VIII, Patris Verlag, 1994, Pp. 274-275, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is : „Ein Blick in die Bündnisgeschichte konstatiert zwei beachtliche Tatsachen. Die erste ist uns bereits bekannt. (...) Wir können sie aber nicht ernst genug nehmen und uns nicht oft genug darauf zurückbesinnen. Es handelt sich um Ursprung und Eigenart dieses Liebesbündnisses mit Schönstatt als Ort und Familie... Dabei dreht es sich zunächst nicht bloß um eine klar erfaßte, abstrakt gesehene und gedeutete Idee, sondern um einen ganz neuen Lebensvorgang in der übernatürlichen Ordnung, der nur im Glauben erfaßt werden kann, der sich in geladener Dynamik ständig wiederholt und unwiderstehlich zur Entfaltung in die Länge, Breite, Tiefe und Höhe drängt; es geht um einen neuen Anfang, um einen neuen Einbruch Gottes in die Heilsgeschichte, um eine neue Gnaden- und Lebensquelle, die unaufhaltsam in endlosem Reichtum sprudelt und Welt und Kirche durchströmen und wandeln möchte; um das principium et fundamentum des gesamten Schönstattwerkes, schlechthin um eine ganz neue göttliche Initiative, um einen Gnadeneinbruch per eminentiam, die beide aus einer großen göttlichen Gesamtplanung heraus sich mit der in Pallotti verkörperten göttlichen Initiative und Gnadenmacht zu einer geschlossenen bipolaren Einheit verbindet und die Gründungsgeschichte des Apostolatus Catholicus abschließt.... Die zweite Tatsache ist von ähnlicher Bedeutung. Alles, was in der Familie an Organisations- und Lebensformen, an Lebenskraft und Fruchtbarkeit geworden ist, verdankt Sein und Wirken, Werden und Wachsen diesem originellen Liebesbündnis.“

¹⁰⁶⁴ Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 117.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 129, ; LSch 1952, II, P. 58.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 131, ; LSch 1952, II, P. 61.

VI.5.3.1. The Schönstatt's Covenant of Love is based on the covenant of the salvation history

The very fact that Fr. Kentenich places the Covenant of Love in the context of salvation history indicates that the total and mutual gift of self to Mary in the Schönstatt consecration takes place at the level of a covenant which is different from that of the Marian consecrations in the tradition of the Church. This element of *Covenant of Love* being based on the *divine covenant* is the hallmark of the Schönstatt consecration and it is a totally new form of Marian consecration in the tradition of the Church. Through this interpretation Fr. Kentenich characterized Schönstatt's Covenant of Love as the original and concrete form of the divine covenant in the salvation history. He even goes to the extent of saying that it is a concrete and original realization of the divine covenant. He states it in the following manner:

*“Die ganze Heilsgeschichte ist die Geschichte eines Liebesbündnisses – die **ganze** Heilsgeschichte. Und unser Liebesbündnis ist weiter nichts als eine konkrete, originelle Verwirklichung dieses Liebesbündnisses. (...) Unser Liebesbündnis ist zunächst eine Konkretisierung, aber **eine originelle Konkretisierung des heilsgeschichtlichen Liebesbündnisses.**”*¹⁰⁶⁷

In short our Covenant of Love is for Fr. Kentenich the “*concrete form of the covenant which God has sealed with the people in paradise and which He wants to realize throughout salvation and world history.*”¹⁰⁶⁸

In a contract there is an exchange of goods and services based on mutual agreement, in which clear conditions are applied. Just like a contract, a covenant is also an agreement between two parties and there is a mutual gift of self to one another in a state of freedom. The God of our salvation history is a God of the covenant. Time and again he established covenants with human beings, which was indeed His way, His art and His style to relate Himself personally with the Human beings. In the biblical covenants sometimes there are *unilateral* covenants, where only one of the two parties has to fulfill the agreement and there are also the *bilateral* covenants, where both the parties have to fulfill the agreement. The many covenants which God has made with human beings right from Adam (Gen. 2:15-17),

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band II, P. 58-59.

¹⁰⁶⁸ LSch 1952, II, P. 25. The original text is: „*dass unser Liebesbündnis eine originelle, konkrete Form des Bundes ist, den Gott mit den Menschen im Paradies geschlossen hat und durch die Heils- und Weltgeschichte verwirklichen will.*“

Noah (Gen. 9), Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18-21), the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai through Moses (Exodus 19-24), David (2 Sam. 7:12-13) and especially through the prophets like Jeremiah (31:31-34), Isaiah (42:6-9; 49:8), Ezekiel (36:26-27; 37:26), are the best examples of God's covenant in the Old Testament. In the fullness of time God made His New covenant with His people through Christ which was accomplished by Him on the cross. Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 7:22-24; 8:6-13; 9:15; 10:29; 12:24; 13:20-21; I Corinthians 11:25 are the best witnesses to God's covenant in the New Testament.¹⁰⁶⁹ Basing on the significance of God's covenant in salvation history Fr. Kentenich draws the connection between the covenants in the history of salvation and Schönstatt's specific covenant in order to highlight Schönstatt's Covenant of Love as a unique spirituality. And therefore Fr. Kentenich states that the divine covenant is the *fundamental meaning, form, strength and norm* of the entire salvation history. In his own words he expresses it as follows:

*"Whoever interprets the past millennia in view of revelation will gladly endorse the statement: the divine covenant is the fundamental meaning, form, strength and norm of the entire salvation history."*¹⁰⁷⁰

Fr. Kentenich explains the divine covenant as the *fundamental meaning* of the entire salvation history based on the Biblical texts from the book of revelation especially on the passages from Rev 19, 6-7.9; 21, 1-5.7; 9-10.22-23.¹⁰⁷¹ He summarizes this notion in the following manner:

"The book of Revelation recounts with dramatic imagery the course of history as directed by God, and vividly portrays its consummation. History's inherent and God-willed meaning is therein revealed—the consummation of the union of love between God and man, symbolically illustrated by the wedding banquet of the bride and the Bridegroom. The two are portrayed at the end of time as completely open and receptive to one another, running into

¹⁰⁶⁹ Cf., Padfield, David, *Five Great Bible Covenants*, in: <http://www.padfield.com/2004/covenants.html>, 01.12.13, ; Cf., Heinrich, Bruce, *Bible Texts Concerning the Covenants*, in: <http://www.formeradventist.com/studies/topical/biblecovenants.html>, 01.12.13.

¹⁰⁷⁰ LSch 1952, II, P. 43, (my emphasis). The original text is: „Wer die verflossenen Jahrtausende im Lichte der Offenbarung überschlägt, unterschreibt gern die Behauptung: Der Gottesbund, das Liebesbündnis zwischen Gott und Volk, ist Grundsinn und Grundform, Grundkraft und Grundnorm der ganzen Heilsgeschichte.“

¹⁰⁷¹ Cf., Locher, Peter/Niehaus, Jonathan/Unkel, Hans-Werner/Vautier, Paul, (Compilers & eds.), *Kentenich Reader: Meeting our Father*, Vol. II, (translated by Mary Cole), Schönstatt Fathers International, 2011, Pp. 54-55, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *Kentenich Reader*, Vol. II).

each other's arms with the tender cry of longing on their lips, "Come!" (Rev. 22,17). They are united with and in one another in an eternal and indissoluble union of love. That is the ultimate purpose of all world events and every event that comes our way."¹⁰⁷²

Fr. Kentenich explains the divine covenant as the *fundamental form* of the entire salvation history beginning with the four great biblical covenants which God made with Adam, Noah, Abraham and with Moses.¹⁰⁷³ By analyzing these four great Biblical covenants, he arrives at the fundamental form of the divine covenant. He explains it as follows:

*"The covenant of love, whose consummation represents the final purpose of all world events, must therefore be the fundamental form of the history of salvation as well, both as a whole and in its individual parts. In other words, through it each event takes on the form and character of love. Each event has been prepared and sent by love, is meant to be awakened and deepened by love, is meant to be creatively shaped and perfected by the repercussions of love. (...) The Lord of history is the God of the covenant. All the strands come together in his hand and are skillfully woven into a single cloth. His root relationship to humanity is the covenant relationship. It is what forms and determines every act of the one who guides the world. It calls for the creative co-activity on the part of the covenant partner guided by God."*¹⁰⁷⁴

Fr. Kentenich further explains the notion of the *fundamental form* based on the covenant of the New Testament using the bridal relationship between Christ and His Church, in order to affirm that the New Testament covenant "*opens up the way and secures the way for the covenant of love with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*".¹⁰⁷⁵ To explain this notion he draws inspiration from the idea of the bridal relationship which is dealt within the letters of St. Paul written to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Corinthians and from the Book of Revelation. The image of the bridal relationship between Christ and His Church is very important to Fr. Kentenich because in this relationship he sees the fundamental form of the covenant, which is *reciprocal* in nature. The above mentioned thoughts can be summarized in the words of Fr. Kentenich as follows:

"This is the new covenant, sealed in the blood of Our Lord. Through it the Church, and with it we ourselves, have been dearly

¹⁰⁷² Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, Pp. 118-119, ; LSch 1952, II, Pp. 43-44.

¹⁰⁷³ Cf., Kentenich Reader, Vol. II, Pp. 55-57.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 120, ; LSch 1952, II, P. 45.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Kentenich Reader, Vol. II, Pp. 55-56.

*bought! The **matrimonium ratum** which was consummated on the cross must become the **matrimonium consummatum** of our personal redemption. The symbolism of a bridal relationship thus entered the New Testament, but in the sense of an adequate illustration for the covenant and relationship of love between Christ and the Church and the soul in the state of grace. At the same time, the illustration for the same fundamental attitude to the Father became that of the father-child relationship. We must remember that these are only images and symbols, and should not dwell on them overlong. Regardless of the imagery, however, one cannot overlook that the central reality is a mutual covenant of love. Baptism is for the New Testament what circumcision was for the Old—the integration and incorporation in the covenant relationship. Through baptism all who have been baptized have made a covenant with Christ. They have been baptized into his death and stand in a communion of death with him. They are called into an indissoluble union with him in a sacred and mystical communion of being, living, loving, and fates, and with him be drawn into his own union of love in the Holy Spirit with the Father.”¹⁰⁷⁶*

Fr. Kentenich further explains the notion of the **fundamental strength** based on the promises made to Jacob and Moses; based on the images concerning God’s dealing with His people, which are manifested in the Book of Hosea and Isaiah in the Old Testament and based on the image of wine and branches in the New Testament. It can be summarized as follows:

“Just as the covenant with God was Israel’s fundamental form and fundamental purpose, it was also its fundamental strength, that is, its undying source of strength. In the covenant, Yahweh promised to protect his chosen people. He lent them the strength of his arm, his arm of omnipotence, and Israel felt sheltered in his protection. They relied on and trusted in him in every situation and never ceased to call on him, especially when the waters of oppression ran deep. Despite the times they doubted and strayed, they always looked for and found their way back to God’s covenant.(...) The New Testament is entirely imbued by the covenant, by the community of love and life with Christ. The branches must wither unless they are attached to the vine (cf. Jn 15, 1-6), and the members cannot live and work apart from the head (cf. 1 Cor 12, 12-26). The same is true of all Christians.”¹⁰⁷⁷

Finally Fr. Kentenich explains the divine covenant as the **fundamental norm** using two examples from the second book of Kings. The people of the Old Testament lived and strived to live in the light of God’s covenant because they

¹⁰⁷⁶ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, Pp. 122-123, ; LSch 1952, II, Pp. 48-49.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, Pp. 124, 126, ; LSch 1952, II, Pp. 51, 54.

understood the importance and its impact in their life. When the awareness of the covenant became bleak the patriarch and the prophets reminded the people of Israel to return to the covenant and to renew it again. So that it become the norm for their existence and for their everyday life. For the people of the New Testament the baptismal covenant is the norm, the heart and the centre of Christian life. Fr. Kentenich explains this notion as follows:

“Er (Gottesbund) ist die Grundnorm für Gesinnung, Handel und Wandel. Vornehmlich das Alte Testament sah und erlebte den Gottesbund als die große Schicksalsmacht seiner Geschichte. Bundestreue brachte Segen, Bundesbruch Fluch auf Fluch. Wirren und Schicksalsschläge drängten jeweils zur Rückbesinnung auf den Bund und zum erneuten Bundesschluß. Verwarf Gott sein untreues Volk im Laufe der Jahrhunderte nicht ganz, so geschah es mit Rücksicht auf die Treue der Patriarchen und Propheten.... Periodenweise drängen die Propheten zur feierlichen Erneuerung, um ihn wiederum zur Daseinsnorm und Lebensform zu machen.(....) Im Neuen Testament steht der Bund mit Christus, der im Taufbund grundgelegt und durch die Sakramente, durch göttliche Führungen und Fügungen und durch persönliches Ringen und Streben vervollkommen wird, schlechthin im Mittelpunkt des christlichen Lebens. Er ist die Achse, um die sich alles dreht, die Norm, die alle Heilsfragen klärt und über Segen und Fluch im Diesseits und Jenseits entscheidet.”¹⁰⁷⁸

The deeper meaning and significance of the Covenant of Love as *Schönstatt's Fundamental Purpose, Form, Strength and Norm* can be understood only in the context of these four important dimensions of the divine covenant. This is one of the unique characters of Schönstatt's Covenant of Love, which is not found in any other modern religious congregation as per the knowledge of Fr. Kentenich, but only present in the family history of Schönstatt. Fr. Kentenich refers to the “*Heavenwards*”, the Schönstatt prayer book which contains the entire spirituality of Schönstatt, wherein the divine covenant of the salvation history is recalled to affirm in clear terms that the Covenant of love is oriented on the divine covenant of salvation history. The statements made by Fr. Kentenich on this theme will give us a clearer picture:

“Our covenant awareness goes so deep that it encompasses and is at home not only in the narrower confines of our original Schönstatt world, and is not even limited to the broader circle of the history of salvation of the New Testament. Its radius extends to Adam and Eve and embraces every great moment of the covenant

¹⁰⁷⁸ LSch 1952, II, Pp. 54-56.

with God in the Old Testament. Once more, that is how similar our unique covenant of love is to the universal covenant with God in the history of salvation!”¹⁰⁷⁹

“Heavenwards, which may be considered an authentic document of our spirituality, demonstrates the same thing. (...) The short, aphoristic references to the main actors in God’s plan in the Old Testament are not there by some coincidence. (...) It is the source of serious reflection about the universal covenant reality in the history of salvation.”¹⁰⁸⁰

“The covenant reality has taken such deep root in our awareness and feeling for life that we may unhesitatingly call it our fundamental form, our fundamental purpose, our fundamental strength, and our fundamental norm. That is how great the similarity is which we have to the thought and feeling, desires and actions of the Old and New Testament! I am not sure if another modern religious community could make the same claim to the same extent that we can. Each page in our family history is a testimony to this deep-rooted and far-reaching similarity.”¹⁰⁸¹

Another unique character of the Covenant of Love which is highlighted by Fr. Kentenich in the context of the divine covenant of the salvation history is the inner relation between the Covenant of Love and the baptismal covenant.

VI.5.3.2. The Covenant of Love is the renewal of baptismal covenant

In his exposition on the divine covenant in the salvation history we have seen that Fr. Kentenich points out that for the people of the New Testament the baptismal covenant is the norm, the heart and the centre of Christian life.¹⁰⁸² This is also the affirmation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which says:

“In the liturgy of the Easter Vigil, during the blessing of the baptismal water, the Church solemnly commemorates the great events in salvation history that already prefigured the mystery of baptism.”¹⁰⁸³

“All the Old Covenant prefigurations find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus.”¹⁰⁸⁴

“The blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus are types of baptism and the Eucharist, the sacraments of new life.”¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁷⁹ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 131, ; LSch 1952, II, Pp. 60-61.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, Pp. 130, 131-132, ; LSch 1952, II, Pp. 59, 61.

¹⁰⁸¹ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, Pp. 129- 130, ; LSch 1952, II, P. 58.

¹⁰⁸² See the explanation of Fr. Kentenich on divine covenant as the fundamental norm.

¹⁰⁸³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1217, in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a1.htm, 03.12.13.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1223, in: Loc. cit.

*“Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua) and the door which gives access to the other sacraments.”*¹⁰⁸⁶

Fr. Kentenich speaks with great conviction that the sacrament of baptism makes a person into a Christian and the consecration to Mary in Schönstatt (Covenant of Love with Mary) together with Baptism makes a person as a child of Schönstatt. He sustains that the consecration to Mary in Schönstatt leads to the renewal of baptismal covenant in an original and specific form. He states this in the following way:

*“Wie die Taufe zum Christen, so machen Taufe **und** Weihe uns zum Schönstattkind. Die Weihe ist hier in dem bei uns gebräuchlichen Sinne einer originellen und konkreten Erneuerung unseres Taufbundes gemeint.”*¹⁰⁸⁷

In this statement Fr. Kentenich is of the same opinion as Grignion de Montfort. One could experience at this point the influence of Grignion de Montfort on Schönstatt’s consecration. We have already discussed at length in Chapter 2 and 3 that Montfort recommends the devotion of consecration to Mary, which leads the Christian person to a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy baptism. It is worth quoting Montfort’s statement about this in his *True Devotion* at this point of our discussion once again. He says:

*“As all perfection consists in our being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus it naturally follows that the most perfect of all devotions is that which conforms, unites, and consecrates us most completely to Jesus. Now of all God’s creatures Mary is the most conformed to Jesus. It therefore follows that, of all devotions, devotion to her makes for the most effective consecration and conformity to him. The more one is consecrated to Mary, the more one is consecrated to Jesus. That is why perfect consecration to Jesus is but a perfect and **complete consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin**, which is the devotion I teach; or in other words, it is **the perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy baptism.**”*¹⁰⁸⁸

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1225, in: Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1213, in: Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁸⁷ LSch 1952, II, P. 59.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary*, 120, in: *God alone*, op. cit., P. 327, (my emphasis).

The consecration formula of Montfort clearly highlights the unique fact that the role of Mary and the demands of baptism are intermingled.¹⁰⁸⁹ One may be wrong to say that the quotation of Montfort gives an impression that both Fr. Kentenich and Montfort are speaking about the same reality and there is nothing new in it. The novelty in the explanation of Fr. Kentenich lies in the fact that he speaks about the renewal of our baptism from the perspective of the covenant. According to him the covenant with God¹⁰⁹⁰ and the covenant with Mary are interrelated. One should not misunderstand that Fr. Kentenich is trying to equate the covenant with Mary with the covenant with God. He expresses the interrelatedness between them in the following manner:

*“The covenant of love with the Blessed Mother is an expression of and a means toward, and an outstanding safeguard of the covenant with God. Obviously, the Covenant of Love with Mary belongs to a lower order, but is nevertheless, in accordance with God’s plan, of extraordinarily great importance. Just as the way to Christ is through Mary, so, too, the Covenant of Love with her must be considered and valued as simply the classical means of securing and making fruitful the covenant with God.”*¹⁰⁹¹

This interrelatedness between the covenants is seen by Fr. Kentenich as a unique means to renew our baptismal covenant, the covenant with the Triune God. The covenant of Love is not seen by him as just a renewal of the baptismal covenant but much more than that is involved. The following quote will make it clearer for us:

*“For us, the covenant of love with the Blessed Mother as it historically came about and came to fruition is a far-reaching renewal, reenforcement, and safeguard of the baptismal covenant, namely the covenant with Christ and the Blessed Trinity. Every consecration and the covenant renewal it implies is a new, a freely chosen and freely willed decision for Christ, for him and for his interests and kingdom. (...) To put it in other words, it represents a deeper growth into the intimate communion of love between him and us and the Blessed Trinity.”*¹⁰⁹²

¹⁰⁸⁹ Cf., Gaffney, Patrick, J., *St. Louis Mary Grignon De Montfort and the Marian Consecration*, op. cit., P. 149.

¹⁰⁹⁰ With the term *covenant with God* Fr. Kentenich refers to the baptismal covenant, which is namely the covenant with the blessed trinity.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 183, ; Kentenich, Pater Josef, *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin: Eine angewandte Mariologie*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 1973, Pp. 246-247, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*).

¹⁰⁹² *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*, P. 129, ; LSch 1952, II, Pp. 57-58.

The Covenant of Love is “*a freely chosen yes on our part to the fundamental Marian relationship contained in the grace of baptism*”.¹⁰⁹³ But on the other hand he considers the grace of baptism “*in essence also a Covenant of Love with the Mother of God*”¹⁰⁹⁴ because it “*makes us children of Mary as well*”.¹⁰⁹⁵ Therefore she as a mother carries out her baptismal education in everyone who has given his/her heart to her in the Covenant of Love. This baptismal education “*consists of making this objective Mother-child relationship – in addition to the membership in Christ and childhood in God – a deep, personal covenant of hearts*”.¹⁰⁹⁶ Mary through her love educates the individual to set the love in them in the right position and transforms them into her likeness and into Christ in a perfect way. This is asserted by Fr. Kentenich in the following way:

*“The ‘Mother of Fair Love’ has no greater interest or more important task than to set the love in us aright, that is, to transform, after her own likeness, all who have given their hearts to her into fully formed children of a singularly great and organic love of God and neighbor. She sees to it that the covenant with her, which is already a natural consequence of the covenant with God, will develop through the Holy Spirit into a deeper covenant with Christ the Lord and with ‘the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort’ (2 Cor 1,3), as well as into a perfect transformation into Christ.”*¹⁰⁹⁷

Thus the Covenant of Love is understood and described as the renewal of baptismal covenant, which takes place through the baptismal education of Mary. Therefore the fundamental Marian relationship “*in its total structure, namely in its preparation and subsequent renewal and deepening, the consecration may be considered an important part of baptismal education*”.¹⁰⁹⁸ This understanding and description of the consecration to Mary in relation to the renewal of baptismal vows and promises is different from that of Montfort and this makes the Covenant of Love unique and original.

VI.5.3.3. Marian character and its rootedness in the Shrine

In the beginning of this chapter we have already mentioned that without Mary and without the knowledge about the role of Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich it is

¹⁰⁹³ *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 182.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 183, ; *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, P. 247.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 182.

very difficult to understand the “mystery of Schönstatt”. As clearly mentioned, one of the leading mysteries of Schönstatt, the Covenant of Love and Mary, plays a vital role in the Covenant of Love. Therefore Fr. Kentenich defines the originality of the Covenant of Love as follows:

*“The originality of our Covenant of Love is found in it’s specifically Schönstatt character, namely in its deeply Marian character and its rootedness in our shrine. This means that Mary is our immediate covenant partner to the extent that she, under the title of “Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt”, is active from her shrine as the educator of many people for the establishment of an all-embracing and deep-rooted movement of renewal and education in the Church and world and (is active there) in fostering its vitality and fruitfulness.”*¹⁰⁹⁹

The above definition indicates that Schönstatt and Mother Thrice Admirable are covenant partners and that she resides at Schönstatt in the Shrine, from where she remains active as educator. This Marian character and its rootedness in the Shrine is presented in detail by Fr. Kentenich in one of his talks during the October Week 1950 while explaining the originality of the Covenant of Love. He explains it in the following way:

*“Es ist das ein originelles Liebesbündnis. Wollen Sie sich bitte bewußt werden, worin die Originalität liegt. Die Gottesmutter schließt ein Bündnis mit Schönstatt und den Schönstattkindern. Das will heißen, aus Liebe ist sie bereit, wenn Sie wollen, verpflichtet sie sich kraft des Liebesbündnisses, aber durch Liebe verpflichtet sie sich, sich hier niederzulassen, von hier aus eine große Erneuerungs- und Erziehungsbewegung mit weltweiten Ausmaßen in Szene zu setzen und uns dazu als kleine Werkzeuge zu benutzen. Und wir, was tun wir? Wir verpflichten uns, uns zu öffnen, ein Ja dazu zu sagen, wir verpflichten uns, unsere armseligen Selbst-erziehungsbemühungen der lieben Gottesmutter, der großen Erzieherin, hier anzubieten, damit sie daraufhin diese dreifache Pflicht umso lieber und treuer auf sich nimmt und bis zum Ende der Zeiten durchführt. Ein originelles Liebesbündnis!”*¹¹⁰⁰

The above explanations about the originality of the Covenant of Love strongly highlight the Schönstatt’s Marian character, namely, Mary is considered as our immediate covenant partner under the title *Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt*, she is active from the Shrine as educator and our entrustment to Mary is localized in the Shrine. These are the unique characteristic features of the

¹⁰⁹⁹ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 139, ; LSch 1952, II, Pp. 77-78.

¹¹⁰⁰ Kentenich, Joseph, *Oktoberwoche 1950*, op. cit., P. 345.

Covenant of Love, when compared with the other great Marian consecrations in the traditions of the Church.

In the second chapter we have dealt in detail about the historical development of the devotion of Marian consecration in the Church and we have nowhere seen that the one who consecrates himself/herself to Mary has ever considered Mary as his/her partner or educator and nowhere we have seen that the entrustment to Mary is localized. One might get the impression by going through the explanation of Fr. Kentenich that the Covenant of Love is a completely new concept in the Church. To avoid any misunderstanding Fr. Kentenich remarks that it is strongly rooted in the tradition of the Church and that it grew out of the tradition of the Church. The originality comes from the fact that Schönstatt adapted everything, which was valuable in the Church but transformed it in a very creative and original way. He asserts it as follows:

*“Das Liebesbündnis wurzelt also in der Vergangenheit. Sehen Sie, aus dieser Wurzel ist das Ganze herausgewachsen. (...) Wir haben alles Wertvolle in der Vergangenheit übernommen, aber dann schöpferisch umgestaltet. Alles ist originell. Alles, was geworden, ist schöpferisch umgestaltet.”*¹¹⁰¹

Thus the Covenant of Love becomes unique to Schönstatt because of its deep Marian character. Let us now discuss about these unique features in detail.

Fr. Kentenich asserts in clear terms that in the founding act of the Covenant of Love Mary and Schönstatt are the covenant partners. They are covenant partners because there is a mutual give-and-take as partners. Mary on one side takes her residence in the Shrine and draws young hearts to herself through her education and on the other hand the Schönstatt members entrust themselves not as slaves but as her instruments and show their willingness to be educated by her. This is beautifully expressed by Fr. Kentenich in the year 1952 where he says:

“The Blessed Mother and Schönstatt appear on the scene as covenant partners. The Blessed Mother promised to take up her abode in Schönstatt, to draw youthful hearts to herself from there, and through her school of education to make Schönstatt children the bearers of a great movement of renewal. Schönstatt’s members promised to give themselves completely to the Blessed Mother, to willingly and obediently allow her to educate them to be her

¹¹⁰¹ Ibid., P. 346.

instruments, so that she could use and consume them to bring about the renewal of the world."¹¹⁰²

In this explanation the two sides, the *objective* and the *subjective* side, of the "mystery of Mary" (taken from Montfort) is highlighted. The objective side refers to Mary's position in the plan of Salvation and the subjective side refers to the complete surrender by the individual to the educative task of Mary.¹¹⁰³ The objective side of the "mystery of Mary" is very important at this part of our discussion because one could raise here the question: why should one make the Covenant of Love with Mary?

Our covenant partner Mary is first of all "*the official and permanent companion and helpmate of Our Lord in the entire work of redemption*".¹¹⁰⁴ It is very obvious for Fr. Kentenich that this "*position of the Blessed Mother in the objective plan of salvation is and remains the deepest and most effective permanent reason for our unreserved surrender of self to her*".¹¹⁰⁵ He saw the advantages in imitating the practice of God, who included her in His plan of salvation right from incarnation to Golgotha and wished her to be the mediatrix of all graces. By doing so it will be of great help for our own salvation and it will pave way to enter into a Covenant of Love with Mary, which would be indissoluble in character. This conviction of his is echoed in *Heavenwards*. This particular role of Mary in the plan of salvation runs like a golden thread in the prayers of *Heavenwards*.¹¹⁰⁶ Fr. Kentenich expresses it in the following way:

"They (Prayers of Heavenwards) depict the Blessed Mother as the great sign in the heavens of time [cf. Rev 12, 1]. The fundamental and original image of the Bible shines out to us – the Virgin-Mother. It has been enriched with the precious trousseau of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption into heaven, and wears the crown of royal dignity and sovereign power over heaven and earth. As the Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of Grace she is exalted over all that happens in the world and time, in closest, inseparable

¹¹⁰² LSch 1952, I, P. 87, (translated by Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Als Bündnispartner treten die Gottesmutter und Schönstatt auf. Die Gottesmutter verspricht, sich in Schönstatt niederzulassen, von dort aus die jugendlichen Herzen an sich zu ziehen und die Schönstattkinder in ihrer Erziehungsschule zu Trägern einer großen Erneuerungsbewegung zu machen. Schönstatt verspricht, sich der Gottesmutter ganz hinzugeben, sich willig und fügsam als ihr Werkzeug erziehen und für die Zwecke der Welterneuerung formen, gebrauchen und verbrauchen zu lassen.“

¹¹⁰³ Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, Pp. 142-143.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 142.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 102.

¹¹⁰⁶ Cf., *Ibid.*

union with the Redeemer of the world. As a result the Christ-bearer becomes the bearer of the sacrifice, the preparer of the sacrifice, the servant of the sacrifice, the bringer of the sacrifice, and distributor of the fruits of the sacrifice. That is why we call her the official and permanent associate and helpmate of the Lord in his entire work of redemption."¹¹⁰⁷

We have already discussed in length at the first part of this chapter about this image of Mary, where we asserted that the Covenant of Love is rooted in this unique role of Mary in the plan of salvation. Therefore it is unnecessary to reemphasize the whole discussion here once again. However I just want to highlight one point here, namely, our covenant partner Mary is *not only God's helpmate but also our helpmate*.¹¹⁰⁸ As our helpmate Mary plays a vital and unique role of mediation between God and us. This important notion is expressed by Fr. Kentenich as follows:

*"As Mediatrix she stands between God and us, between heaven and earth, between Creator and creation. In and with Christ she stands at God's side. In the same manner, however, she also stands at our side."*¹¹⁰⁹

In his letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen in 1954 Fr. Kentenich mentions that Mary's position as the mediatrix in the history of salvation plays a very vital role in the Schönstatt consecration. He states:

"The fact that the order of salvation has a Marian character is, according to God's design and decree, based upon Mary's unique and universal role of mediation. This is a special gift to our present time in which humanity is threatened with ruin, it is not only the basis of the Holy Father's consecration of the world (to the Immaculate Heart of Mary), but is also the basis of the Schönstatt consecration. This clear and definite conviction was present with compelling force even at the dawn of our family history; it constantly enveloped the family with a growing fullness of light and happy warmth, and determined its life and activity, essentially, in all respects. As a great power, it contributed, towards the

¹¹⁰⁷ LSch 1952, I, P. 93, (translated by Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „ Sie sehen in der Gottesmutter das große Zeiehen am Himmel der Zeit (Vgl. Apk 12, 1). Darinnen strahlt uns das biblische Grund- und Urbild entgegen: die Jungfrau-Mutter. Es ist durch den kostbaren Brautschatz der Unbefleckten Empfängnis und leiblichen Himmelfahrt bereichert und trägt die Krone der königlichen Würde und herrscherlichen Gewalt über Himmel und Erde auf dem Haupte. Es steht als Miterlöserin und allgemeine Gnadenvermittlerin über allem Welt- und Zeitgeschehen in engster, unzertrennlicher Verbindung mit dem Welterlöser. Dadurch wird die Christusträgerin zur Opferträgerin, zur Opferbereiterin, zur Opferdienerin, zur Opferbringerin, zur Verteilerin der Opferfrüchte. Wir nennen sie deshalb die amtliche Dauergefährtin und Dauerhelferin des Herrn beim gesamten Erlösungswerke.“

¹¹⁰⁸ Cf., Mary, our Mother and Educator, P. 120.

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

formulation of the Founding Document and was responsible for its planned and continuous realization."¹¹¹⁰

This explanation of Fr. Kentenich is once again an affirmation proof that the Covenant of Love is rooted in the tradition of the Church.

Secondly our covenant partner Mary is seen as the *Mother Thrice Admirable* (MTA). We have already discussed in detail about the historical emergence of the title *Mother Thrice Admirable*. Here I would like to discuss the meaning and significance behind this title in relation to the Covenant of Love. The Marian character of the Covenant of Love can be seen in the "*childlike motherly Covenant of Love between her, our true Mother, and us, her true children.*"¹¹¹¹ This has its foundation in the personal and permanent response to Christ's words from the cross: "*Ecce Mater tua*", which was His last will and testament. Fr. Kentenich describes this context as follows:

"The Covenant of Love which exists between Mother and child on the objective level is acknowledged in the consecration in a conscious, voluntary and unconditional manner and is made the personal and permanent form of living and acting for time and eternity. Consequently, it may, will, and must be considered the classical answer to the testament of our dying Lord, "Ecce Mater tua! Ecce filius tuus!" and be considered the most perfect, appropriate, and timely imitation of St. John's example as he describes it in such unmistakable terms: "And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:27). Through the Covenant of Love we bring to realization the command of our Saviour."¹¹¹²

Based on this context, Covenant of Love is saying *Yes* to the testament of Our Lord and through this we made Christ's testament as our own. Fr. Kentenich asserts it as follows:

"...unser eigenes Liebesbündnis...ist weiter nichts als ein Jasagen zum Testament des Heilandes. Ich sage nur Ja dazu. Er hat ja gesagt: „Siehe da deine Mutter, siehe da deinen Sohn“ (Jo 19,

¹¹¹⁰ Kentenich, Joseph, *Die heilsgeschichtliche Stellung Mariens und die Frühzeit Schönstatts*, op. cit., P. 147, (translated by Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Die marianische Modalität der Heilsordnung, die nach Gottes Planung und Bestimmung in der einzigartigen und universellen Mittlerstellung Mariens wurzelt und sich in der Gegenwart als ein besonders Gottesgeschenk an eine vom Untergang bedrohte Menschheit erweist, (ist) nicht nur die dogmatische Grundlage der päpstlichen Weltweihe, sondern auch der Schönstattweihe. Diese Überzeugung stand mit großer Klarheit und Sicherheit und gewinnender Anziehungskraft bereits am Morgen unserer Familiengeschichte; sie hat sie allezeit in wachsende Lichtfülle und beglückende Wärme gehüllt und ihr Leben und Wirken allseitig wesentlich mitbestimmt. Sie hat wie eine gemeinsame Großmacht die Gründungsurkunde mitgestaltet und für ihre planmäßige und dauernde Verwirklichung gesorgt.“

¹¹¹¹ Mary, *our Mother and Educator*, P. 106.

¹¹¹² Ibid., P. 173.

26f). *Und wir haben das bewußt, dieses Testament, genommen zu unserem Testament.*”¹¹¹³

By saying Yes to the testament of Christ, we do exactly the same thing as St. John did, namely, “*we take Mary into our hearts and give her the place of honour there which in and with God is her due.*”¹¹¹⁴ Through this an inner relationship is formed between Mary and us. “*As a result, we may expect that this spiritual in-one-another between Mary and us and the mutual fusion of hearts will bring fruits similar to those St. John was given.*”¹¹¹⁵ By saying Yes to the testament of Christ, “*We firmly believe that Mary is not only the Mother of God and the Mother of Christ but also in truth and reality our Mother... therefore **the Mother Thrice Admirable.***”¹¹¹⁶ By acknowledging her as our Mother and by honouring her with the title ***Mother Thrice Admirable***:

*“We bow in deep humility before her power, wisdom, and kindness and trustingly call her **Mother Thrice Admirable**, (admirable in her radiant power, wisdom, and kindness). We bow before her threefold motherly function in the kingdom of God and call out to her a second time with deepest confidence and trust: Mother Thrice Admirable, in us, too, prove that you are three times admirable: Admirable as the one **who bears Christ**, admirable as **our Sustainer**, admirable as the **Educator** of the divine life in our souls.*”¹¹¹⁷

We also acknowledge her threefold task as: Warrior, who combats here on earth with the enemies of God; as Victress, who over throws the power of Satan; and who has the power to overcome our strong passions and desires.¹¹¹⁸ She as our spiritual Mother is “*therefore, to be addressed once more as three times admirable, admirable as the **One who generates life**, admirable as the **One who nourishes life**, admirable as **Educator.***”¹¹¹⁹ These are the three tasks of a natural mother concerning our physical life. And Mary being our spiritual Mother carries out these tasks in our divine life.¹¹²⁰

¹¹¹³ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band I, P. 147.

¹¹¹⁴ *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 173.

¹¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 15.

¹¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Pp. 12-13.

¹¹¹⁸ *Cf.*, *Ibid.*, P. 13.

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 15.

¹¹²⁰ *Cf.*, *Ibid.*

As her first task: “*She co-generated us at the very instant when she pronounced her Fiat (cf. Lk 1, 38).*”¹¹²¹ She gave life to her Son, Christ, who is the head of the Church and to us, His mystical body, through baptism. She gave birth to us spiritually beneath the Cross.¹¹²² The characteristic feature of Mary as our spiritual mother is well expressed by Fr. Kentenich in his conference to the members of the Marian Sodality on May 3, 1914 as follows:

*“Mary is our Mother! She is our true, real, supernatural Mother – not just a foster or an adoptive mother. As co-redemptrix she cooperated effectively with Christ in order to bring about in us supernatural life, the life of grace. Mary is our Mother! She became our Mother when the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, when she became the Mother of God. This was publicly confirmed beneath the cross: **Ecce Mater tua** (Jn 19, 27...). From that hour onward she has loved us with a truly warm, ardent, maternal love.”*¹¹²³

Mary’s second task is to nourish our divine life because she is the Mother of grace. Mary as co-redemptrix has merited all the graces under the cross. To nourish our divine life within us she channelizes all the graces from heaven to us through her unique role as mediatrix.¹¹²⁴ This characteristic feature of Mary as the one who lavishes graces and gifts upon us is well expressed by Fr. Kentenich in one of his talks to the group of delegates of the Schönstatt Family during 1947 as follows:

*“The Blessed Mother is well aware of the law that we are familiar with, namely that we bond easily with someone, with a spiritual being, if this being showers us with superabundant love. That’s why the Blessed Mother showered us with gifts and graces already during her life on earth. She lavished them on us by paying a high price for our Redemption and election — including the election which is now the essence of our lives. “**Stabat mater dolorosa juxta crucem lacrimosa...**” The sorrowful Mother stood beneath the cross and wept bitter tears. What a suffering this Mother endured beneath the cross. At that time she gave birth to us. Hence she is not only the Mother of Our Lord, but she is also the woman who is configured to Christ and forms us into Christ. And this motherly heart has also lavished her gifts and graces upon us during these past years.”*¹¹²⁵

¹¹²¹ Ibid., P. 16.

¹¹²² Cf., Ibid.

¹¹²³ *With Mary into the New Millennium*, P. 104, ; Kastner, Ferdinand, *Unter dem Schutze Mariens*, op. cit., P. 229.

¹¹²⁴ Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 16.

¹¹²⁵ *With Mary into the New Millennium*, P. 113.

The third task, which makes Mary as admirable is her task of education. This is one of the unique characteristic features of Mary, which is in Schönstatt affirmed, asserted and attributed to Mary. This is once again something a very new concept in the Marian Consecration in the tradition of the Church. Fr. Kentenich emphasized this educative task of Mary right from the very beginning in his talks and discourses, because this was his fundamental experience with Mary and his firm conviction since his ninth year of age. We have discussed about this at length under the topic, Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich, in the beginning of this chapter.

The emphasis on Mary's task as educator by Fr. Kentenich was made for the first time on All Saints day in the year 1912. In his North America Report, which was written in the year 1948 he mentions that Mary became the great educator for the Schönstatt Work through the Covenant of Love.¹¹²⁶ In a study to Fr. Bea¹¹²⁷ during his stay in Switzerland Fr. Kentenich explains to him about the emergence of the theme, namely: Mary's task as educator in Schönstatt.¹¹²⁸ He explains it in the following way:

*"The Prefounding Document focuses on self-education and we chose the Mother of God as our protectress; the Marian Congregation presents us with a shift in emphasis: it places the Mother of God more directly at the center. According to God's presumable new plan the Mother of God was supposed to come strongly to the fore as the Lord's permanent helpmate during the work of redemption. She was called on the plan as educator, so to speak, in order to demand the previously launched self-education as a predisposition for her activity from Schönstatt, to inspire it and to crown it through her wise educational work."*¹¹²⁹

The theme Mary as Educator became an outstanding theme in the talks and writings of Fr. Kentenich since 1950. This is clear from one of the talks given by Fr. Kentenich during the pedagogical convention in the year 1950 where he states:

"She is God's instrument par excellence and as instrument it is her great mission and task in dependence on Christ, on the living God, to be and to remain educator of all peoples. ... She the great educator will work miracles of spiritual transformation, miracles of

¹¹²⁶ Cf., Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., P. 284.

¹¹²⁷ He was the contact person of Fr. Kentenich of the Holy Office before and during the time of his exile.

¹¹²⁸ Cf., Id., P. 285.

¹¹²⁹ Schl (Schlüssel zum Verständnis Schönstatts) 1951, 194. Father Kentenich cited from PFD (Pre Founding Document) 1912, 15. "Under the protection of Mary we wish to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities." As cited in: Ibid.

education. ... We, too, have been entrusted to her care. She is our great educator."¹¹³⁰

The significance of being bonded with Mary through the Covenant of Love is the "*essence of Marian education*".¹¹³¹ In his talks during the Marian-Pedagogical Congress, May 18-21, 1932, Fr. Kentenich highlights the relationship between the essence of Marian education and the bonding with Mary as follows:

*"What is the significance of bonding with Mary? I can say that it is the **essence of Marian education**. A Marian education which does not progress to bonding with Mary will never achieve the entire meaning and blessing of devotion to Mary and can never claim to have exhausted the depth and ultimate goal of Marian devotion. That is to say, bonding with Mary is the essence, the heart, the deepest and ultimate goal of Marian education. We could also put this in a more familiar form and say that it is the childlike love for the Blessed Mother. (...) Being bound to the Blessed Mother produces a comprehensive attitude toward God, toward creation and toward myself. (...) It is the security of a child's attitude toward the Triune God, toward life and toward self. I am the child!"*¹¹³²

Fr. Kentenich calls this bonding with Mary as the organic process of interrelationship between nature and grace.¹¹³³

What makes the Covenant of Love so unique and original is the educative task of Mary in the life of the person who has entrusted oneself to Mary who works *from the shrine* in Schönstatt. In the Covenant of Love, the love of Mary is manifested in the task of education *from the shrine*. This is expressed by Fr. Kentenich in one of his talks during the Milwaukee Tertianship where he says: "*Die Liebe zur Gottesmutter...was wir später genannt haben Schönstattgeheimnis, Erziehungsmacht, Erziehungsaufgabe der lieben Gottesmutter vom Heiligtum aus.*"¹¹³⁴ In a more detailed manner he explains the competence of Mary as educator

¹¹³⁰ PT (Pädagogische Tagung) 1950, 28, 30, 31, as cited in: Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., P. 285. The original text is: „*Sie ist in hervorragender Weise Werkzeug Gottes, und als Werkzeug hat sie die große Sendung und Aufgabe, in Abhängigkeit von Christus, vom lebendigen Gott Erzieherin der Völker zu sein. ... Sie, die große Erzieherin, wird Wunder der seelischen Umformung, Wunder der Erziehung wirken.... Auch wir sind ihr geschenkt worden. Sie ist unsere Erzieherin.*“

¹¹³¹ Cf., *With Mary into the New Millennium*, P. 133.

¹¹³² Ibid., Pp. 133-134.

¹¹³³ Cf., Ibid., P. 134.

¹¹³⁴ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band I, P. 169.

from the shrine in Schönstatt in his talks during the tertianship for the superiors and educators of the South American Pallottine Provinces,¹¹³⁵ where he states:

*“During these days I had the opportunity to refer to the Founding Document....There the Mother of God speaks clearly and plainly: I will fulfill your wishes, i.e. it will please me to dwell in your midst. I will draw the hearts of the youth to myself and educate them to be useful instruments. Hence she reveals herself as the great educator. Note how we immediately associate with the term “mother” the term “educator”. We see here the twofold function of a mother: to help conceive and to help in the educational process. Thus, from the very beginning we have interpreted the word “ecce mater tua” as “ecce educatrix tua”. ”*¹¹³⁶

The very moment, when Mary began to dwell in the shrine in Schönstatt on October 18, 1914 is marked as the *birth hour* of Schönstatt by Fr. Kentenich. Initially in the year 1912 the accent was strongly on the aspect of self-education under the protection of Mary. But the situation of the outbreak of World War I led to the realization that self-education is not sufficient anymore and hence there was a necessity to entrust the educational task into the hands of Mary by drawing her down from heaven into the shrine by our co-operation and sacrifices. By taking her dwelling in the shrine she became our leader and educator. This points out to the fact that Covenant of Love can be understood only in the context of Mary’s educational task from the shrine.¹¹³⁷

In our earthly life we have experienced that there are certain places, which are selected by Mary herself, where she made her home and there are certain places which are dedicated or consecrated to Mary for various reasons. In both cases the Marian shrines have been turned into places of grace and places of pilgrimage. But in Schönstatt the uniqueness lies in the fact that it is neither selected by Mary herself, nor dedicated or consecrated to her but she is invited to come and take her dwelling in order to take up the educational task. It is proved in the tradition of the Church that Mary is especially active in a more fruitful manner in the pilgrimage places, just like the sun, though it shines everywhere but still it is more effective in some places and regions. Not only that, Mary during her earthly life was also very active in the places, which she visited, namely, the home of her cousin Elizabeth (cf., Lk 1, 39-45), the

¹¹³⁵ Cf., Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, op. cit., P. 285.

¹¹³⁶ BT (Brasilien Terziat) 1952, III, 183f. Father Kentenich cited from FFD (First Founding Document) 1914, 33f. See a very similar text in: LSch 1952, II, 231, as cited in: Ibid., Pp. 285-286.

¹¹³⁷ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *Gilbert Schimmel: The End Crowns the Work*, Waukesha WI, Schönstatt Fathers, 1996, Pp. 125-130.

wedding at Cana (cf., Jn 2, 1-12), the Cenacle (cf., Acts 1, 14) or when she accompanied St. John to Ephesus.¹¹³⁸ All these facts indicate that Mary is active in distributing the graces from her “shrines”. Fr. Kentenich expresses this truth as follows:

*“All of these homes which Mary visited in a particular way - the home of Zechariah and of the newly married couple (at Cana), the Cenacle, and the parish house at Ephesus - are a clear indication of the inestimable riches which the Blessed Mother has given to her children from her shrines in the course of the centuries of Christianity.”*¹¹³⁹

These facts indicate that the concept of Mary distributing her covenantal graces from the shrine is not born out of the fantasy of Fr. Kentenich but it is rooted in his Biblical way of thinking and in the tradition of the Church. Fr. Kentenich, based on these foundations, asserts that the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt distributes her graces through her task as educator from her shrine, which could be called as her formation centre. He asserts it as follows:

*“Wherever the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt settles, she is primarily and particularly active ... as educator in our modern times. Her shrines are the formation centers and workshops of the new man and the new social order in the way that God desires for today, so that the Church can perfectly fulfill her mission for our times. From there she wants to draw human hearts to herself and educate them to become perfect instruments in her hand. All who dedicate themselves to her there, all who make a covenant of love with her will be taken by her into a serious school of genuine, solid everyday sanctity such as our times need. They will be placed by God into Our Lady’s care, so that she may educate them to carry out His great plan.”*¹¹⁴⁰

This is exactly the originality of Schönstatt which Fr. Kentenich points out in his talk to the Schönstatt’s Girls’ Youth on August 31, 1966. He expresses it as follows:

*“It is an original trait of the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt that she acts in a unique way from her places of grace as the great educator of the elite and the masses.”*¹¹⁴¹

Fr. Kentenich in his letter to his general superior Father Turowski affirms the above mentioned original trait as his firm conviction. The following quote is an

¹¹³⁸ Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 130-131.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 132.

¹¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 135.

¹¹⁴¹ *With Mary into the New Millennium*, Pp. 116-117.

excerpt from this letter, which clearly describes his conviction of the original trait from the perspective of the Founding Document.

"It is the conviction of the Schönstatt Family that the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen took up her abode in our shrine as our educator on 18 October 1914. The law of the open door has unveiled God's plan with regard to our Marian way of living and doing things. That is why we drew down our Lady into our shrine, as it were, that is, we drew her down with our prayers and sacrifices. In the course of the years she has developed her educational activity from there with extraordinary fullness, and rooted Pallotti's generally valid statement about the "missionary who works wonders" at an actual place.

The Founding Document and the whole history of the Schönstatt Family eloquently testify to this fact.

The Document clearly shows the Blessed Mother as our educator.

"In future I will draw youthful hearts to myself from here and educate them to become useful instruments in my hand."

It unmistakably gives the aim of her educational activity - to reveal Mary's glories through forming saints.

"This chapel should become the cradle of our sanctification."

*Even the type and form of holiness is more clearly defined. We are concerned here with **Covenant Spirituality**:*

"I love those who love me. Prove that you love me, then ..."

*We are concerned here with **Workday Sanctity**:*

"Through the faithful and most faithful fulfillment of your duties and through a zealous life of prayer earn many merits."

"Do not believe that at this present serious and important time it is something extraordinary if you increase the demands you make on yourselves to the highest level."

*We are concerned here with the **Spirituality of an Instrument**:*

I will educate youthful hearts "to become useful instruments in my hand".

Since then all education that takes place in the Family has consciously been attributed to the Blessed Mother and undertaken in complete dependence on her.... We are proud of describing ourselves as a Marian movement of education and educators, who are attached to a place, and we speak of the Marian element as a

formal principle of our education. This gives all educational measures and factors a definite Marian form and colour.”¹¹⁴²

According to Fr. Kentenich this original trait is understood by him not as his own invention or creation but as the guidance of the Divine Providence. He asserts it as follows:

“Es ist ein meisterhafter Schachzug göttlicher Führungskraft, daß sie Unsere Liebe Frau als unsere Führerin und Erzieherin in unser Heiligtum hineingeplant und hineinbeordert und mitten in ihre Familie hineingesetzt und dort auf den Thron erhoben hat, und daß sie uns zur Verwirklichung und Verewigung dieses grandiosen Planes benutzt hat und weiter gebrauchen will.”¹¹⁴³

In this letter he further explains the significance of the educational task of Mary, which is fundamentally rooted in the last testament of Christ from the Cross.¹¹⁴⁴ Speaking on the *ability* of Mary to educate, he says that it essentially lies in the fact that:

“Our Lord himself was the masterly educator of his Mother. His pre-eminent love for her drew him down to earth, and he devoted

¹¹⁴² Kentenich, Joseph, *Vorsehungsglaube: Turowskibriefe 1952/1953*, (Studien an P. Turowski, 2. Band), Manuskript, Berg Sion, 1999, Pp. 874-876, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Nach Familienüberzeugung hat die Dreimal Wunderbare Mutter und Königin sich am 18. Oktober 1914 in unserem Heiligtum für uns als Erzieherin niedergelassen. (283) So hat das Gesetz der geöffneten Türe uns den Plan Gottes von unserem marianischen Sein und Sollen entschleierte. Darum haben wir Unsere Liebe Frau ins Heiligtum gleichsam heruntergezogen: d.h. herunter gebetet und geopfert; und sie hat ihre erzieherische Tätigkeit im Laufe der Jahre von dort aus in überreicher Fülle entfaltet und dem allgemein gültigen Wort Pallottis vom „Missionar, der Wunder wirkt“, eine konkrete, lokal gebundene Prägung und Auswirkung gegeben. Beredtes Zeugnis legt davon die Gründungsurkunde und die ganze Familiengeschichte ab. Die Urkunde läßt die Gottesmutter deutlich als Erzieherin auftreten. Ich will „künftig von hier aus die jugendlichen Herzen an mich ziehen, sie erziehen zu brauchbaren Werkzeugen in meiner Hand.“

Sie gibt eindeutig das Ziel der erziehenden Tätigkeit an: Offenbarung von Mariens Herrlichkeit durch Formung von Heiligen: Dieses Heiligtum soll für uns „die Wiege der Heiligkeit werden“.

Selbst Art und Form der Heiligkeit wird genauer bestimmt: es geht um Bündnisfrömmigkeit:

„Ich liebe die, die mich lieben. Beweist mir, daß ihr mich liebt, dann ...“

Es geht um Werktagsheiligkeit:

„Erwerbt euch nur durch treue und treueste Pflichterfüllung und eifriges Gebetsleben recht viele Verdienste.“ -

„Glaubt nicht, daß es in der heutigen ernsten und großen Zeit etwas Außergewöhnliches ist, wenn ihr die Anforderungen an Euch aufs höchste steigert“.

Es geht um Werkzeugsfrömmigkeit:

Ich will die jugendlichen Herzen erziehen „zu brauchbaren Werkzeugen in meiner Hand.“

In der Familie wird seither alle und jede Erziehung bewußt der lb. Gottesmutter zugeschrieben und in vollkommener Abhängigkeit von ihr getätigt.... Wir bezeichnen uns selbst mit Stolz eine lokal gebundene, ausgeprägt marianische Erzieher- und Erziehungsbewegung und sprechen vom marianischen Element als einem Formalprinzip unserer Erziehung, das allen Erziehungsmaßnahmen und -faktoren eine bestimmte marianische Form und Farbe gibt.“

¹¹⁴³ Ibid., P. 877.

¹¹⁴⁴ Cf., Ibid., P. 879.

the thirty years he spent in the silence of Nazareth to educating his Mother through his word and example. He continued this work of education during his public life and even under the Cross."¹¹⁴⁵

Moreover her ability to educate consists in the following three aspects, namely, in her *"brilliant fundamental attitude as an educator, comprehensive and certain knowledge, and profound influence"*.¹¹⁴⁶ The fundamental attitude is nothing but the *"creative force of selfless service, love that is aware of the responsibility rooted in the task of a mother, which, in this instance, is founded on her motherhood."*¹¹⁴⁷ Fr. Kentenich terms the comprehensive and certain knowledge of Mary as *"pedagogical knowledge"*,¹¹⁴⁸ which has a thorough influence concerning the well being of humanity. First and foremost her pedagogical knowledge is exactly aware of the ideal of our education, namely, *"each one of us should become an alter Christus, an altera Maria, in our own way"*.¹¹⁴⁹ According to Fr. Kentenich this is the purpose of our Covenant of Love with the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt. He states:

*"As Christ's Mother she is the woman who was formed by Christ like no other. As our Mother she stands before us as the great educator who forms us into Christ, and who by Christ's final injunction was given the task to form her willing and open children as perfectly as possible after the crucified and transfigured form of Christ. Because the [Marian] consecration is a mutual covenant of love, it binds both partners. We re-elect Mary to be our Mother and Queen, i.e. we personally bestow on her the right to educate us, a right which is already hers by God's decree. We thereby declare our readiness to unconditionally let her form and shape us into the perfect image of Christ."*¹¹⁵⁰

*"By virtue of the covenant of love, which is mutual, the Blessed Mother takes over full responsibility that we transform our inner abilities more and more. No, **she** transforms them so that we can say more and more: We are on the way of becoming an **altera***

¹¹⁴⁵ Ibid., P. 895, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „...daß der Heiland selbst der meisterliche Erzieher seiner Mutter gewesen ist. Die Liebe zu ihr habe ihn in hervorragender Weise auf die Erde gezogen, in den 30 Jahren, die er in der Stille zu Nazareth zugebracht, habe er sich durch Wort und Beispiel der Erziehung seiner Mutter gewidmet, die er im öffentlichen Leben bis unter dem Kreuze fortsetzte.“

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid., P. 896.

¹¹⁴⁷ Cf., Ibid. The original text is: „ die schöpferische Kraft selbstlos dienender, verantwortungsbewußter Liebe wurzelt im Mutteramt, das in diesem Falle im Muttersein gründet.“

¹¹⁴⁸ Ibid., P. 901.

¹¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁰ Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 39, ; Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin, P. 275.

Maria; that is, an altera Maria who can prove herself with grace in the changing world and Church of today."¹¹⁵¹

Fr. Kentenich calls this as "mutual exchange of character".¹¹⁵² In the Covenant of Love, we entrust to Mary our imperfections, sickness, feelings and everything which belongs to our weak personality. And in exchange Mary entrusts to us her character, which is crystal clear formulated in the prayer of Heavenwards¹¹⁵³ as follows:

*"Let us walk like you through life,
Let us mirror you forever,
Strong and noble, meek and mild,
Peace and love be our endeavour.
Walk in us through our world,
Make it ready for the Lord."*¹¹⁵⁴

It is because of the reason that Mary can exercise great influence on our lives. Fr. Kentenich is convinced that we can entrust ourselves with great trust in the powerful educative hands of the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt. He asserts this as follows:

*"Die Bedeutung ihrer eigenen Mutter-, Mittler- und Erzieheraufgabe erkennt, die darin besteht, ihre Kinder in Christus umformen zu helfen, damit sie die verlorenen Plätze der gefallenen Engel im Himmel einnehmen können. Daraus mögen wir schließen, daß wir uns mit großem Vertrauen den gütigen, den mächtigen und weisen Erzieherhänden der Dreimal Wunderbaren Mutter und Königin von Schönstatt ausliefern dürfen."*¹¹⁵⁵

The ability of Mary to educate us into the image of her Son and in her own image comes from her pedagogical knowledge, which further consists in possessing knowledge about the heart of her Son, Jesus Christ; the insights into God's plan; our weak human nature and about the snares of the world and devil. Fr. Kentenich expresses it as follows:

¹¹⁵¹ *With Mary into the New Millennium*, P. 116.

¹¹⁵² *Ibid.*, P. 115.

¹¹⁵³ *Cf.*, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁴ *Heavenwards*, P. 226, the original version is:

*„Laß uns gleichen deinem Bild,
ganz wie du durchs Leben schreiten,
stark und würdig, schlicht und mild
Liebe, Fried' und Freud' verbreiten.
In uns geh durch unsere Zeit,
mach für Christus sie bereit.“* (*Himmelwärts*, P. 163.)

¹¹⁵⁵ *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, P. 277.

*“Who knows every movement of the Heart of the God-Man better than she does, who knows his way of life better than she does, who knows his fundamental attitude to all questions, or his interests, better than she does? In every circumstance here on earth she embraced him not just with her mind and thoughts, but also with the warmth of her heart. Up in heaven she lives constantly with him. She has an insight into God’s plans; she knows the obstacles in our nature and the means to overcome them, so that we can reach the heights. The snares of the world and the allures of the devil are well known to her. She does not make use of all this knowledge just with sober and impersonal objectivity, she is personally interested in our wellbeing even to the least detail.”*¹¹⁵⁶

We have already seen that Mary, through her unique position in salvation history as mediatrix, possesses a share in the mediation of her Son, Jesus Christ. It is through her position, that she exercises great influence on God, on people and on the evil forces by winning the good pleasure of God, by showering the good pleasure on the people entrusted to her care and by crushing the powers and influence of the devil.¹¹⁵⁷ Thus Mary through her God-given power and knowledge,

*“walks through the world as the great educator of peoples ... to give birth to Christ everywhere in order to thus save the periled Christian personality, the periled order of world and society”.*¹¹⁵⁸

And hence Mary searches for places *“from which she can unfold her educative work in an excellent manner.”*¹¹⁵⁹ In Schönstatt *“this great, powerful and kind Mother and educator is the Mother Thrice Admirable who is at work from our shrine by virtue of an unmistakable covenant of love”.*¹¹⁶⁰ Fr. Kentenich asserts that:

*“According to the Founding Document, the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen has, by virtue of the covenant of love, accepted the task to become the Mother of countless saints from her shrine”.*¹¹⁶¹

¹¹⁵⁶ Kentenich, Joseph, *Vorsehungsglaube: Turowskibriefe 1952/1953*, op. cit., P. 902, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Wer weiß aber wie sie um die Regungen des gottmenschlichen Herzens, wer kennt so genau wie sie seinen Lebensstil, wer seine Grundeinstellungen zu allen Fragen und seine Interessen? In allen Lagen hat sie ihn hier auf Erden nicht bloß mit den Sinnen und Verstand, sondern auch mit warmem Herzen in sich aufgenommen. Und droben im Himmel lebt sie ständig mit ihm zusammen. Sie hat Einblick in die göttlichen Pläne, sie weiß die Hemmnisse in unserer Natur und die Mittel, sie zu überwinden und die Höhe zu erreichen; die Fallstricke der Welt und das Gaukelspiel des Teufels sind ihr bekannt. Das alles trägt sie nicht etwa mit nüchterner unpersönlicher Sachlichkeit, sondern mit persönlichem Interesse an unserem Wohl und Wehe bis in kleinste Einzelheiten in sich.“

¹¹⁵⁷ Cf., Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁸ LSch 1952, II, P. 264.

¹¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁰ Kentenich, Joseph, *Vorsehungsglaube: Turowskibriefe 1952/1953*, op. cit., P. 909.

¹¹⁶¹ Ibid., P. 912.

She chose the shrine as her favourite place to distribute the treasures of graces in a rich and effective manner, to educate her people and to guide the leaders.¹¹⁶² *“The Founding Document literally ends with the invitation and call to seal a covenant in the holy place”,*¹¹⁶³ Schönstatt. In other words Fr. Kentenich says that *“the covenant of love with the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt... is sealed in the place of her particular effectiveness, in **her** shrine.”*¹¹⁶⁴ And hence for Fr. Kentenich the most essential thing in the place of grace in Schönstatt is the place (the holy ground) and the shrine.¹¹⁶⁵ The love and the longing for the shrine in the history of Schönstatt is manifested in enthusiastic expressions like *“Schönstatt land” “Homeland”* by people, who visit the shrine frequently¹¹⁶⁶ *“to savor deep spiritual experiences and” to “experience the miracles of transformation”.*¹¹⁶⁷ This is beautifully expressed in one of the prayers “Hymn to my Home” in Heavenwards as follows:

*“Dies Wunderland ist mir bekannt;
Es ist im Taborglanz die Sonnenau,
wo unsere Dreimal wundebare Frau
im Kreise ihrer Lieblingskinder thront
und alle Liebesgaben treulich lohnt
mit Offenbarung ihrer Herrlichkeit
und endlos, endlos reicher Fruchtbarkeit:
Es ist mein Heimatland, mein Schönstattland!”*¹¹⁶⁸

The Shrine is also further symbolized in the prayers of Heavenwards as *“Nazareth, Bethlehem, Tabor, Golgotha, and the Cenacle”.*¹¹⁶⁹ The entire Schönstatt family is convinced of the fact that Mary distributes three fold graces to all those who visit her in the shrine, namely, the grace of a home, the grace of inner transformation and the grace of mission (apostolic fruitfulness).¹¹⁷⁰ Fr. Kentenich in his talks during the *Crowning Week* in October 1946 mentions these three fold pilgrim graces. He states:

“In the past we often spoke about our original graces of pilgrimage. Can we recognize these pilgrimage graces in these

¹¹⁶² Cf., Id., Pp. 264-265.

¹¹⁶³ LSch 1952, I, P. 101.

¹¹⁶⁴ Ibid., P. 103.

¹¹⁶⁵ Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, P. 220.

¹¹⁶⁶ Cf., Id.

¹¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Himmelwärts*, P. 158.

¹¹⁶⁹ Id., P. 104, ; Cf., *Himmelwärts*, Pp. 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54.

¹¹⁷⁰ Cf., LSch 1952, II, P. 265, ; Cf., Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, P. 328.

three points: the grace of a home, the grace of transformation, and the grace of a mission? [Firstly], the grace of a home. Do we find a perfect home in the heart of our Blessed Mother through the covenant of love, and in addition, through the heart of our Lady in the heart of God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Through the covenant of love do we find a home in the hearts of noble-minded people? That should be the fruit that is given to each one of us who strives seriously for the ideals and ideas of our Family. Secondly, the grace of transformation. Is it not indicated in Workday Sanctity as the answer of life to the God of life? And thirdly, the graces we need to become creative in forming others and to unfold ourselves. (Gestalten und entfalten) Those are the graces of a mission.”¹¹⁷¹

The love for the shrine found further expressions in the birth of Daughter Shrines, Home Shrine, Heart Shrine, etc. Wherever people made the Covenant of Love and lived it, it was always attached to a shrine. By the birth of the first Daughter Shrine Fr. Kentenich assured that the same graces as in the Original Shrine can also be expected in the Daughter Shrines.¹¹⁷² He further declared in one of his talks given to the families in Milwaukee that:

“Everything which holds true for the Original Shrine and for the daughter shrines also holds true for the home shrines.... The same six promises and the same six demands of the Founding Document also apply to the home shrines.”¹¹⁷³

All these indicate the importance of the attachment to the shrine. In fact after having travelled to many countries in this world Fr. Kentenich summarized his observation concerning the importance of shrines as follows:

“Bisherige Erfahrungen mit der Schönstattbewegung lassen nur dort Erfolge erwarten, wo mit dem Bau des Heiligtums begonnen, wo seine Bedeutung vorbehaltlos anerkannt und wo es zur Grundlage und zum Mittelpunkt der ganzen Arbeit gemacht wird.”¹¹⁷⁴

In his address to the families after a family's consecration on October 2, 1966, he mentioned that it is not important whether we speak about the Original Shrine or a Daughter Shrine. What is most important is to know that Mary

¹¹⁷¹ Kentenich, Pater Josef, *Krönung Mariens: Rettung der christlichen Gesellschaftsordnung*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 1977, Pp. 84-85, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). See also: Kentenich, Pater Josef, *Okttoberwoche 1951: Vorträge*, bearbeitet von Heinrich M. Hug, Berg Sion, 2001, Pp. 12-21.

¹¹⁷² Cf., Kentenich, Joseph, *Rom Vorträge: Für die Leitungen der Schönstätter Verbände vom 17. November - 21. Dezember 1965*, Band I, Manuskript, Pp. 120f, 139.

¹¹⁷³ Niehaus, Jonathan, *The Birth of the Home Shrine*, Schönstatt Fathers, Waukesha, 1994², P. 101, (my emphasis).

¹¹⁷⁴ LSch 1952, II, P. 263.

establishes herself in our shrines to give birth to Christ anew, by forming the members of the Church into new Christians, who are demanded for the future times in accordance to God's plan.¹¹⁷⁵ One cannot give a home to Mary by just installing her picture in a place or in a corner of house to carry out her educational task. The deciding factor is that *a place will turn into a Shrine only through the personal Covenant of Love with Mary.*¹¹⁷⁶ It was the conviction of the Schönstatt Family that *"the significance and fruitfulness of the covenant increase when it is sealed in childlike faith in our shrine, or at least in spiritual union with it."*¹¹⁷⁷ The unique act of sealing the Covenant of Love in the shrine with the Mother Thrice Admirable is for Fr. Kentenich *"a meaning-filled concept, a symbol, a program, a mission, a mysterious power."*¹¹⁷⁸

We can summarize our discussion here on this topic in short with the following saying of Fr. Kentenich:

*"Our Lady's preeminent activity as covenant partner in Schönstatt's shrines is as the great educator of the Christian nations, leading them to the summit of everyday, instrument, and covenant piety, and as the foundress and leader of a comprehensive and modern movement of education and renewal. It is from there that she wishes to draw those hearts to herself which consecrate themselves to her in the spirit of Schönstatt, to educate them as instruments in her hand, and to use them in all places."*¹¹⁷⁹

Thus we can conclude from the facts discussed above that the Marian character and her educational task are rooted in the shrine. This is very clearly pictured in the First Founding Document. Through the first Covenant of Love on October 18, 1914, Mary was invited to a place, namely, the old chapel, to make it her dwelling place and to turn it into a place of pilgrimage. One cannot understand the Covenant of Love apart from the shrine. Fr. Kentenich explains this from the perspective of the First Founding Document as follows:

*"Sie hat beim Bündnisabschluss laut Gründungsurkunde versprochen, ihre Herrlichkeiten **von hier**: von **ihrem Heiligtum**, von **ihrem Tabor**, aus in der Familie und durch die Familie zu offenbaren. Sie hat versprochen, sich **unter uns** – das heißt **hier** – niederzulassen und reichlich Gaben und Gnaden auszuteilen, **von***

¹¹⁷⁵ Cf., *With Mary into the New Millennium*, Pp. 179-180.

¹¹⁷⁶ Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, P. 223.

¹¹⁷⁷ LSch 1952, I, P. 100.

¹¹⁷⁸ Ibid., P. 124.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 74.

hier aus die jugendlichen Herzen an sich zu ziehen und zu brauchbaren Werkzeugen in ihrer Hand – das heißt in der Hand der Dreimal Wunderbaren Mutter und Königin von Schönstatt – zu erziehen. Sie will dafür sorgen, dass alle, “die **hierher** kommen, um zu beten, die Herrlichkeiten Mariens erfahren und bekennen: **Hier** ist wohl sein, **hier** wollen wir Hütten bauen, **hier** soll unser Lieblingsplätzchen sein”. ”¹¹⁸⁰

From this solid statement of Fr. Kentenich we can conclude that the central thought of the First Covenant of Love is that Mary has made a Covenant of Love with the place of Schönstatt and at the same time with the entire Schönstatt Family and both are inseparable from one another. This shows the Marian character and its rootedness in the shrine as the originality of the Covenant of Love.

VI.5.3.4. The mutual obligation of the earthly covenant partner: Contributions to the capital of grace of the Mother Thrice Admirable.

The Covenant of Love of Mary with Schönstatt is summarized since 1933 in the catchphrase: “Nothing without you, MTA, nothing without us” in the Schönstatt Family. The first part “Nothing without you, MTA” indicates the dependency, trust and confidence of the Schönstatt Family on Mary and her activities in the shrine. The second part “nothing without us” indicates that we, the earthly partners completely and willingly place ourselves at the disposal of Mary (MTA) through our good works, prayers, sacrifices and strivings for self-sanctity. Through this unique way of self-giving we invite her to take her dwelling in the shrine and to transform it into a place of grace. But at the same time we also assure our co-operation for her mission from the shrine.¹¹⁸¹ This *reciprocal act of self-giving in terms of our co-operation with Mary* is one of the key aspects, which makes the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt very original. This original aspect of the Covenant of Love is described in his letter from Nueva Helvetia on May 6, 1948, by Fr. Kentenich as *mutual obligation of the earthly covenant partner*, which consists in the faithful and enlightened co-operation with Mary to resolve her three fold task from the shrine. He states:

*“God’s activity in the history of our Family and of the history of the times, revealed to us without particular difficulty the intent of Our Lady,
(a) to come to dwell in Schönstatt by virtue of this covenant,*

¹¹⁸⁰ Id., P. 122.

¹¹⁸¹ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 51.

(b) from there to introduce into the whole world a profound and far-reaching movement of renewal and education to rescue the Christian personality and social order,
 (c) to use us as instruments toward this end.
 But at the same time it showed us the mutual obligation of the covenant partners to a faithful and enlightened co-operation so as to resolve this threefold task.”¹¹⁸²

This mutual obligation of the covenant partners through their co-operation with the MTA for her tasks is upheld by Fr. Kentenich as the world-conquering tendency in one of his talks during the October Week 1947, where he says:

*“Natürlich müssen Sie das ganze Liebesbündnis auf sich wirken lassen in seiner Universalität, d.h. nicht nur in seiner mystischen Hingabe. Die Gottesmutter gern haben und umgekehrt von ihr geliebt werden, das ist nicht allein der Ton. Dahinter steckt die welterobernde Tendenz: Wir wollen ihr mithelfen, ihre Lebensaufgabe zu lösen, das will heißen, die Lebensaufgabe der Dauerhelferin beim gesamten Erlösungswerke.”*¹¹⁸³

The mutual obligation of the covenant partners is seen by Fr. Kentenich as the originality of the Covenant of Love. He makes a very clear statement about this in his talk during the October Week 1950. He asserts it as follows:

“Es ist das ein originelles Liebesbündnis. Wollen Sie sich bitte bewusst werden, worin die Originalität liegt. Die Gottesmutter schließt ein Bündnis mit Schönstatt und den Schönstattkindern. Das will heißen, aus Liebe ist sie bereit – wenn Sie wollen -: verpflichtet sie sich kraft des Liebesbündnisses, aber durch Liebe verpflichtet sie sich, sich hier niederzulassen, von hier aus eine große Erneuerungs- und Erziehungsbewegung mit weltweiten Ausmaßen in Szene zu setzen und uns dazu als kleine Werkzeuge zu benutzen. Und wir, was tun wir? Wir verpflichten uns, uns zu öffnen, ein Ja dazu zu sagen; wir verpflichten uns, unsere armseligen Selbsterziehungsbemühungen der lieben Gottesmutter, der großen Erzieherin, hier anzubieten, damit sie daraufhin diese dreifache Pflicht um so lieber und treuer auf sich nimmt und bis

¹¹⁸² Kentenich, Pater Joseph, *Sie kam - Sie sah - Sie siegte: Lehrbriefe 1948*, bearbeitet von Heinrich M. Hug, Berg Sion, 1997, Pp. 80, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „Das Wirken Gottes in Familien- und Zeitgeschichte entschleierte uns ohne sonderliche Schwierigkeit die Absicht der Gottesmutter,

(a.) sich kraft dieses Bündnisses in Schönstatt niederzulassen,

(b.) von dort aus zur Rettung christlicher Persönlichkeit und Gesellschaftsordnung eine tiefgehende und weitreichende Erneuerungs- und Erziehungsbewegung in alle Welt hineinzuleiten und
 (c.) uns als Werkzeuge dazu zu benutzen; es zeigte uns aber auch gleichzeitig die Pflicht der Bündnispartner zu treuer und erleuchteter Mitwirkung bei Lösung dieser dreifachen Aufgabe.“

¹¹⁸³ Kentenich, Pater Joseph, *Strategie des Liebesbündnisses*, herausgegeben und bearbeitet von P. Heinrich Hug, Patris Verlag, 1997, P. 147, (my emphasis).

zum Ende der Zeiten durchführt. Ein originelles Liebesbündnis!"¹¹⁸⁴

This reciprocal character of the Covenant of Love, namely the mutual obligation of the covenant partner is mentioned in the Founding Document in crystal clear terms:

*"Ego diligentes me diligo. I love those who love me. Prove to me first that you really love me, that you take your resolution seriously. (...) Do not think that in times like these, when momentous decisions are being made, that it is something extraordinary to increase your striving to the highest degree... Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace. By fulfilling your duties faithfully and conscientiously and by praying fervently, earn many merits and place them at my disposal."*¹¹⁸⁵ *Then it will please me to dwell in your midst and dispense gifts and graces in abundance. Then from here I will draw youthful hearts to myself and educate them to become useful instruments in my hand."*¹¹⁸⁶

Thus from the lines of the Founding Document it is easy to understand that the mutual obligation of the covenant partner lies in *bringing contributions to the capital of grace of MTA*. The expression "*capital of grace*" arouses the thought that the spirituality of Covenant of Love is related to the field of finance and economics. But that would be a very wrong understanding. The word "*capital*" doesn't refer to the collection of funds for some business undertakings in the literal sense. In the spirituality of Covenant of Love it is used symbolically to refer to the collection of sacrifices and good deeds by the Schönstatt members to assist Mary for her undertakings from her shrine, namely for the moral and religious renewal of the world in and through her Son, Jesus Christ. In the spiritual sense it means that we bring our good deeds, efforts of self-sanctification and sacrifices as investment to Mary so that she might convert them into graces and distribute it from her shrine to all those who visit her in the shrine. Since this investment has got something to do with the grace, which indeed belongs to the supernatural life, it is termed as "*capital of grace*".¹¹⁸⁷ And hence we can say: The capital of grace is nothing but the collection of all the merits by the members of the Schönstatt Family through their personal efforts of striving for holiness. Just like one deposits the money in the bank,

¹¹⁸⁴ Kentenich, Joseph, *Oktoberwoche 1950*, op. cit., P. 345, (my emphasis).

¹¹⁸⁵ My emphasis.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, No. 11, op. cit., Pp. 32, 34.

¹¹⁸⁷ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 51, ; Cf., *The Capital of Grace*, in: <http://www.schoenstatt.org/en/about-schoenstatt/the-shrine/capital-of-grace.htm>, 11.12.13.

every contribution of the capital of grace is deposited symbolically in the hands of the MTA in the shrine as an offering for her mission.¹¹⁸⁸ Fr. Kentenich explains it as follows:

*“What we refer to here is usually called our “contributions to the capital of grace”. Here the statement applies: **Totum pro toto** – all for all. Everything belongs to her; she may and should use everything for the purpose of redeeming the world.”¹¹⁸⁹ By doing so we harbor the silent wish and the confident hope that she will settle here in her shrine and will educate, use, and guide the ... people in their great mission for the world.”¹¹⁹⁰*

The above explanation of Fr. Kentenich indicates clearly the importance of our co-operation with Mary in her mission. This was clear for Fr. Kentenich right from the time the Founding Document came into existence. He made the Marian Sodalists to understand right from 1914 that without our co-operation the transformation of the old chapel into a place of grace is not going to be achieved. This implies that the first Covenant of Love should not to be simply an onetime ‘Yes’ on the part of the Sodalists but should be a continual, co-operative ‘Yes’ all through their lives and it should consist in their personal striving for holiness. This is because Fr. Kentenich was of the firm conviction that our striving towards Christian holiness will employ a gentle force on MTA by drawing her from heaven into the shrine. In 1915 for the first time Fr. Kentenich formulated the mutual co-operation of the (earthly) covenant partner as: “contributions to the capital of grace of the Mater Ter Admirabilis”.¹¹⁹¹ This meaningful, expressive and brilliant image of capital of grace in Schönstatt is once again a unique concept in the Marian consecration in the tradition of the Church.¹¹⁹² According to him this contribution to the capital of grace should be understood as:

¹¹⁸⁸ Cf., Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, P. 328.

¹¹⁸⁹ Redeeming the world must be understood here as her cooperation with her Son, Jesus Christ in His redemptive work for the salvation of the mankind.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 159.

¹¹⁹¹ The term capital of grace or treasury of grace belongs to Schönstatt’s “*termini dogmatici*.” (Footnote no. 97, in: Peters, Danielle, M., *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, P. 448) ; There is a probability that this term was born out of the conversation between Fr. Kentenich and Joseph Engling, who was the prefect of the Congregation Minor. He took up the idea and spread it among his fellow sodalists. The captioning of the term “capital of grace” by Fr. Kentenich is probably influenced by two literatures, namely, 1. Anonymous (1909), *Die drei Hauptmittel zur Rettung der Jugend*, Fribourg, 2. Auflage, o. J. (1909); 2. Hilgers (1912), *Joseph, Das Büchlein von Unserer Lieben Frau*, Freiburg, 1912. The expression “capital of grace” (Gnadenkapital) is found in the book written by Hilgers on P. 70f. Further references are found in the same book on Pp. 309, 315. (Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., P. 215.)

¹¹⁹² Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 59.

*“energetic self-sanctification in the service of the apostolate;... as our good works...the merits of which we as humble knights of the Mother of God, put at her disposal so that she, with her almighty power of intercession and from this place may transform inwardly as many people as possible, helping to educate them to be apostles of maturity and achievement.”*¹¹⁹³

The striking image of the capital of grace manifests very clearly the mutual reciprocity of the covenant partners. The words of the Founding Document manifest this reciprocity in clear terms, where the demands, promises and the commitment of Mary are expressed in the words: *“Ego diligentes me diligo.”*¹¹⁹⁴ *I love those who love me. Prove to me first that you really love me, that you take your resolution seriously”.*¹¹⁹⁵ These words imply that the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt will be incomplete and cannot bear fruit without the mutual co-operation of the covenant partners. Therefore Mary says:

*“This (self) sanctification I demand of you. (...) Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace. By fulfilling your duties faithfully and conscientiously and through an ardent life of prayer, earn many merits and place them at my disposal”.*¹¹⁹⁶

This demand should be understood as demand of love from the part of Mary and not as a demand based on some legal law. It is a very important demand, which Mary makes, because without our self-sanctification the task of Mary as educator will not be very fruitful. And hence Fr. Kentenich says:

*“Even when she takes over the primary task as educator, she must rely on our co-operation and our self-education. That is a law in the kingdom of God. That is why she concentrates so much on motivating our self-education and encouraging our sacrificial spirit. That explains her brief but poignant demand: “This self-sanctification I demand of you... Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace.”*¹¹⁹⁷

¹¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁴ These words are taken from the Book of Proverbs 8:17 which say: *“I love those who love me and go to meet those who seek me.”* This quote appears in the liturgical readings of the Marian feasts. (See the 1st reading of “Maria geistliche Mutter und Lehrerin” in: Messlektionar: Sammlung von Marienmessen, Benzinger Zürich – Braunschweig, 1990, P. 117). The statement: “I love those who love me” is not meant, as it is sometimes assumed that the Mother of God loves only those who love her (in the juridical sense, where one has the right to claim the exchange of services). It means that she is bound to love and to do good to those who open up themselves to her in love. In other words: those who love her are bestowed with gifts with love. This doesn’t rule out the fact that she does not bestow the gifts of love on those who do not love her.

¹¹⁹⁵ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, No. 11, op. cit., P. 32.

¹¹⁹⁶ Ibid., P. 34.

¹¹⁹⁷ Schoenstatt’s *Covenant Spirituality*, P. 39.

At this point one could raise the objection whether the concept of bringing contributions to the capital of grace resembles the Montfort's spirituality of "complete surrender" to Mary. It is worth mentioning here that one cannot overlook the fact that Fr. Kentenich became acquainted with Montfort's devotion to Mary and was strongly influenced by his spirituality right from the first year of novitiate. He even made his act of consecration to Mary in the novitiate according to Montfort's spirituality. This we have already seen in the beginning of this chapter when we discussed about the role of Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich. And hence in his teaching and in Marian spirituality developed by him we find a number of references to Grignon de Montfort. He does not find any difficulty to say that "*we find it not hard to go to school at Grignon, to understand him and to accept teachings from him*".¹¹⁹⁸ Concerning our discussion here on the topic of capital of grace he admits that we were influenced by the spirituality of Montfort. This he expresses in clear terms by saying:

*"[This supernatural rootedness] was fostered, deepened, and differentiated through our early contact with Grignon. Traces of his influence reach into the earliest beginnings of the family. He had an influence, for instance, on the concept of our Mother Thrice Admirable's capital of grace, and not only on the abstract principle but also on the practical course of development, from the occasional contributions [to the capital of grace] on up to the Blank Check, the Inscriptio, and the Joseph Engling Act. The same is true for our life with, through, and in Mary."*¹¹⁹⁹

*"Daß Grignon unsere Lehre vom Gnadenkapital, vom dreifachen Wert der guten Werke, vom verdienstlichen, fürbittenden und sühnenden Wert, und von deren Verschenkbarkeit beeinflusst hat.... Gleichzeitig erhielt die Idee der Ganzhingabe durch seine Lehre von der »Vollkommenen Andacht« im Laufe der Jahre mannigfache Anregung. **Weiter dürfte jedoch die Abhängigkeit von ihm nicht gehen.**"*¹²⁰⁰

So if the image of capital of grace is taken from Montfort one could ask here: Wherein then lies the originality of Covenant of Love with regard to the contributions to the capital of grace? Is this not just an imitation of the spirituality of Montfort? To give an answer to this question one should focus on the last sentence of the above quotation, which implies that the idea of capital of grace is adapted from

¹¹⁹⁸ LSch 1952, II, P. 90.

¹¹⁹⁹ Ibid., Pp. 82-83, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus).

¹²⁰⁰ Ibid., P. 227, (my emphasis).

Montfort but at the same time there is a further development of this concept of capital of grace in Schönstatt. This is expressed by Fr. Kentenich as follows:

*“The canonization of Blessed Grignon de Montfort (which is in preparation) is an official legitimization of his devotion to Mary, which has become known as the “Grignon Act”. We have adopted it through the capital of grace in its various forms, starting with simple contributions and proceeding up to the Blank Cheque and Inscriptio. However, there are two differences – a certain localisation and a distinctive and concrete apostolic goal.”*¹²⁰¹

In accordance to the teaching of the Catholic Church on the doctrine of merit, Montfort in his perfect devotion to Mary suggested that one should give to Mary the intercessory, expiatory and meritorious value of good works as a gift. Through this suggestion Montfort wanted to express that one could give to Mary not only the outer but also the interior and spiritual goods. So far we can see the influence of Montfort on the concept of the capital of grace.¹²⁰² But the originality lies in the fact that Fr. Kentenich modified the concept of complete surrender of Montfort by applying it specifically to the Mater Ter Admirabilis. This implies that the members of the Schönstatt Sodality should bring their intercessory, expiatory and meritorious value of good works as contributions to the capital of grace to Mary so that the shrine may be transformed by her into a place of grace. They have to place their efforts, sacrifices and the fulfillment of their duties at the disposal of the Mater Ter Admirabilis in the shrine for her purposes without making or claiming any demands of their own. Thus there is a shift from the individual practice suggested by Montfort to a joint effort which is anchored in the shrine, so that Mary could from the shrine, in and through Schönstatt work miracles of grace. This practice of a joint effort indicates that the contributions brought by the members of the sodality don't belong any more to them but to the Mater Ter Admirabilis and hence they are called *contributions to the capital of grace of Mater Ter Admirabilis*. This form of collaboration in the work of the Mater Ter Admirabilis is perceived as the mutual

¹²⁰¹ *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, Pp. 83-84, (translated by: Fr. Jonathan Niehaus). For Grignon (who was canonised in 1947) two teachings of our faith were important. He connected them inwardly and rendered them pedagogically fruitful: firstly, Mary's place in the work of redemption of the New Covenant, secondly, the conviction that human co-operation with the work of God's grace bears fruit for the good of the whole Church. The “Grignon Act” is the believers' free offer to hand over all the fruitfulness of their spiritual actions to Mary, the Mother of the Church, so that she can make use of it for the good of the Church in the “blood circulating” in the Mystical Body of Christ. (*Footnote, No. 3*, in: *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, Pp. 83-84.)

¹²⁰² Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., P. 215, ; Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary*, 121-125, in: *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 327-328.

obligation of the covenant partner.¹²⁰³ This is exactly the originality concerning the capital of grace in Schönstatt, which is very clearly summarized by Fr. Kentenich in his letter to Fr. Menningen (officially known as der Zwanzigerbrief) as follows:

*“The Mother of God should simply descend here to this shrine as our educator. We wanted not merely to educate ourselves under her protection – as the Pre-founding Document put it – but rather to have her dwelling in our midst, so that she could take our education in hand along with the education of all who gave themselves to her with us.... In order to motivate her to do this, we offered her our merits in the form of contributions to her capital of grace, to the level of the Blank Cheque, Inscriptio and Engling Consecration. We give ourselves to her with all that we have and are. In return we expect her to prove that from here she is in fact the great educator, and lead us to the heights of holiness and a fruitful apostolic life. According to the Founding Document she clearly agreed to this type of covenant of love. She declared: “Be zealous in bringing me **contributions to the capital of grace**. Then I will gladly take up my abode in your midst and distribute gifts and graces in abundance. In future I will draw youthful hearts to myself from here and educate them to be useful instruments in my hand.” That is the simple, fundamental and original form of Schönstatt’s covenant of love.”¹²⁰⁴*

From the above discussion it is very clear that Fr. Kentenich has developed the notion of Montfort in an original and creative form to the extent of saying that the merits won by our good works could be transformed into graces by Mary. One may find the expression “contributions to the capital of grace of Mother Thrice Admirable” to be an absurd expression without knowing the theological foundations of this concept. This problem came up in the year 1935 and Fr. Kentenich dealt with it under the topic “Sonderideen”, where he mentions that the concept of capital of grace falls within the teachings of the Catholic Church. He expresses it as follows:

*“A whole host of important dogmatic truths have been translated into practical, everyday life in our **contributions to the capital of grace**, or the MTA’s treasure of grace. Let me remind you in passing that we understand these contributions as our good works, whose merits we humbly and chivalrously place at the disposal of the Mother of God, so that, as the Suppliant Omnipotence, she may inwardly transform as many people as possible from here and help to educate them to become mature and active apostles. What is more important is knowledge of the **dogmatic foundations**. (...) I*

¹²⁰³ Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 60, ; Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, op. cit., P. 215.

¹²⁰⁴ Kentenich, Joseph, *Letter to Fr. Alexander Menningen, Milwaukee, August 3, 1954*, op. cit., P. 41, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus).

am thinking here of the teaching on the importance and necessity of grace¹²⁰⁵ and our own enlightened and active co-operation with it; on the merits of good works¹²⁰⁶; on the communion of saints¹²⁰⁷; on the mediation of the Mother of God¹²⁰⁸; on the possibility to offer up the merits of our good works for others¹²⁰⁹, and the effectiveness of these merits; as well as the teaching that we are children of God and members of Christ.”¹²¹⁰

Thus from our discussion on the mutual obligation of the covenant partner, we can conclude that the co-operation of the earthly covenant partners with the MTA plays an inevitable role in making the Schönstatt Shrine into a place of grace. This is based on the faithfulness of the earthly covenant partner in bringing diligently the contributions of capital of grace to Mary through their efforts to live a life of Christian holiness, which in fact is very essential and fundamental for the fulfillment of Mary's mission from her shrine. This implies that through the mutual co-operation the earthly covenant partner participates in the mission of the MTA from the shrine. It is worth mentioning once again that this mutual aspect of cooperation of the covenant partners is indeed very original to the Marian consecration in Schönstatt.

Our discussion on the Marian character and its rootedness in the shrine and the obligation of the covenant partner seen together manifest the essential elements of the Covenant of Love, which makes it so unique and original, namely, the mutual giving up of self to the other in a perfect manner. This indeed is the basic foundational principle of Marian consecration in Schönstatt. Hence let us discuss the various elements, which make this mutual self giving of the covenant partners so unique.

VI.5.3.5. Covenant of Love: A perfect, mutual gift of self to the other

The deep-seated vocation of every human being is love. This is because God, who is love, has etched His own image of love in us during creation. Pope John Paul II expresses this in his document “*Familiaris Consortio*” as follows:

¹²⁰⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 1996-2005, in: op. cit.

¹²⁰⁶ Pius XII, *Mystical Body of Christ*, Nos. 87, 106, 44, ; See: Ps: 84, 12; Col: 1, 24; I Cor: 12, 21; Jn: 15, 5; Eph: 4, 16; Col: 2, 9.

¹²⁰⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 946-948, in: op. cit.

¹²⁰⁸ See the II Part of my 4th Chapter.

¹²⁰⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 2006-2011, in: op. cit.

¹²¹⁰ *Texte zum Verständnis Schönstatts*, Pp. 47-48, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus), ; See: Intercessory prayers in: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 2634-2636, in: op. cit., ; Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 51, ; King, Herbert, *Beiträge zum Gnadenkapital*, in: *Regnum* 40, 2006, 80-91.

*“God is love and in Himself He lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in His own image...God inscribed in the humanity... the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.”*¹²¹¹

This implies that the life of human being is nothing but a continuous response to the love of God through a life of love. Therefore God and human being can relate only at the level of love. The relationship between God and human being at the realm of love is maintained and balanced through the *mutual reciprocal nature* of love. This basic nature of love enables the individual to recognize, accept, respect and to appreciate the uniqueness of the other and to respond to the other in a state of freedom through the gift of self. God gives Himself to human beings by entering into a covenantal relationship with them and human being responds to this covenantal relationship of God by giving oneself entirely to God through consecration. Therefore consecration is nothing but *love for love*.

This *mutual reciprocity* in love is the paramount characteristic feature of the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt. Our understanding of the Covenant of Love is in the sense of *Contractus bilateralis gratuitus*, which implies the mutual and perfect giving of self to the other in true love. This is to say that each covenant partner (Mary and we) gives oneself to the other totally, wholly, undividedly in deep mutual love.¹²¹²

Fr. Kentenich calls the Covenant of Love as “*a perfect gift of oneself to Mary for time and eternity or an absolute and total surrender of self to Mary*”.¹²¹³ Fr. Kentenich made this thought of Pope Pius XII his own, which once again implies that Fr. Kentenich’s view on the Covenant of Love is rooted strongly in the tradition of the Church.¹²¹⁴ He further explains it by saying:

*“In order to give even more weight to the **covenant** character, we intentionally speak...clearly and consciously of a perfect **mutual** gift of oneself and a **mutual** absolute and total surrender of self. That means that just as we, by virtue of the covenant, surrender*

¹²¹¹ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, No. 11, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html, 12.12.13.

¹²¹² Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 154.

¹²¹³ *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*, Pp. 30-31.

¹²¹⁴ This thought is expressed by Pius XII in his address to the Marian Sodality in Rome, January 21, 1945. (See: *Footnote*, No. 7, in: *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*, P. 31.)

ourselves perfectly to Mary of our own free choice and will, she, too, does the very same thing."¹²¹⁵

This notion of *mutual absolute and perfect total self surrender to Mary* is described by Fr. Kentenich as the *heart piece* of the Covenant of Love, which evokes harmony in the person who lives this reality to its fullness¹²¹⁶ and it is "*a mysterious, spiritual two-in-oneness with her*".¹²¹⁷ This is the strong conviction of Fr. Kentenich because he is of the firm opinion that the reciprocal process in love has got the power to accomplish it, due to the following reasons: He says:

*"It detaches and separates us from our self-centeredness. It unites one heart with another until both hearts share a single beat. It has the remarkable power to make the beloved resemble one another and gives them an unbounded power to mutually motivate and creatively exercise the right to make requests of one another."*¹²¹⁸

According to him any true, genuine, personal and noble love enables a person to die to oneself so that the other partner can live a life of his own, which is filled with great richness.¹²¹⁹ He applies this thought of love to the Covenant of Love and uses the terms "You"-love, which is personal love and "It"-love, which is an impersonal love to explain the detaching and the unifying function of love. He explains it as follows:

"If my love for God and love for Mary are really a personal "You"-love and not just a veiled form of [impersonal] "it"-love in disguise, then I must reach out beyond my borders, must sacrifice myself, must let go of self, must relinquish a significant part of my "I"-love, especially those extreme forms of self-clinging, self-enslavement, and self-idolatry. If I do not, I will not be able to lose myself in God or Our Lady; she will not be able to have a full share in my life nor I in hers, and there will be no inner two-in-oneness. My heart must renounce all egocentric self-will, otherwise it cannot attain the fusion of hearts with my covenant partner. I must give up the stubbornness of wanting to have everything my way, otherwise I cannot become one mind with my partner, cannot abandon myself to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, cannot be gradually liberated from the enticements of the world, from the attacks of the devil, and the misleading illusions of my own wayward and mercurial drives. (...) And the more our love dies to self so as to belong entirely to

¹²¹⁵ Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 31, ; *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, Pp. 262-263.

¹²¹⁶ Cf., Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 31.

¹²¹⁷ Ibid., P. 63.

¹²¹⁸ Ibid., Pp. 31-32, ; *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, P. 263.

¹²¹⁹ Cf., Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 34.

the divine "You"... the more perfectly will we receive, together with the divine "You", the purified "I" in return."¹²²⁰

Since love plays a strong role in the Marian consecration in Schönstatt, it is one of the reasons why we call our consecration to Mary as Covenant of *Love*. In this reciprocal process there is a mutual transference of personality based on mutual love between the covenant partners and the gift of self is mutually demanded. Fr. Kentenich expresses this reciprocal process in the Covenant of Love as follows:

*"The consecration (The Covenant of Love) includes, if it is understood correctly, a sort of mutual exchange of persons. (...) We are, of course, dealing here with the unexplored mysteries of love, which for most modern people are a closed book."*¹²²¹

*"Our consecration (The Covenant of Love) brings about not only our surrender to the symbolic meaning of the heart, but... it includes strong personal attachment, warm, mutual and personal love - a love of person for person. Our Lady, our covenant partner... in return for her personal surrender she expects her partner in the covenant to surrender himself in the same personal way, so that, as time goes by, one can repeat: two hearts with but one beat. Therefore, we like to say that the consecration includes total, mutual and personal detachment and attachment."*¹²²²

Thus through the above statements Fr. Kentenich affirms that the Covenant of Love is:

*"A perfect, mutual giving of self for time and eternity, that is, through the consecration we give ourselves perfectly to the Blessed Mother, and she gives herself to us in the same manner. (...) It is a part of the nature of things that each giving of self includes a corresponding giving up of self, just as devotion and detachment are reciprocal parts of love."*¹²²³

From the above statements we can also understand that the reciprocity of love consists not only in the giving up of self but also consists in being accepted by the

¹²²⁰ Ibid., Pp. 33-34, ; *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, Pp. 265-266.

¹²²¹ LSch 1952, II, P. 215, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus). The original text is: „*Weihe schließt füglich – im rechten Sinne verstanden – eine Art gegenseitiger Persönlichkeitsübereignung in sich. (...) Es handelt sich dabei freilich um undurchforschte Geheimnisse der Liebe, die für die meisten modernen Menschen ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln sind.*“

¹²²² Ibid., Pp. 220-221. The original text is: „*Unsere Weihe kennt nicht nur Hingabe an den Symbolgehalt des Herzens, sondern... sie kennt eine starke personale Gebundenheit, eine warme gegenseitige persönliche Liebe, eine Liebe von Person zu Person. Die Gottesmutter, unser Bündnispartner...verlangt für ihre personale Hingabe vom Bündnispartner als Gegengabe die gleiche personale Hingabe, so dass sich mit der Zeit das Wort wiederholen lässt: Zwei Herzen und ein Schlag. Deshalb pflegen wir von der Weihe (das Liebesbündnis) auszusagen: sie schliesst vollkommene gegenseitige personale Preis- und Hingabe in sich.*“

¹²²³ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 66, ; *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, P. 325.

other to the extent that “a creative fusion of hearts and mutual transfer of life”¹²²⁴ is realized.¹²²⁵ Thus from our discussion so far we arrive at three fundamental elements of the Covenant of Love, namely,

“a mutual giving up of self,
giving of self to the other,
and being given a home in the heart of the other.”¹²²⁶

These three elements form an organic two-in-oneness as a result of the reciprocal process of love, which unites two people together to the extent that their souls are fused together in an inseparable manner. Thus from our above discussion the *mutual absolute and perfect total self surrender to Our Lady in love* in Schönstatt can be summarized with the words of Fr. Kentenich as follows:

“It (The Covenant of Love) is... a total, mutual covenant of love, i.e., a total mutual exchange of possessions and hearts, or a total union of hearts between the two partners in the covenant. In our case the two partners are Our Lady and the candidate for consecration. The attitude of both is: *totum pro toto*, all for all, total self-surrender for total self-surrender, love for love, loyalty for loyalty. The consecration includes a total, mutual detachment, self-giving and acceptance. In this way the two partners are united in life, work and aim such as exists between a master-workman and a rational instrument.”¹²²⁷

Montfort in his treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin says that the one who is consecrated to Mary belongs entirely to Mary in every way and Mary too belongs totally to the consecrated person in every way.¹²²⁸ Fr. Kentenich elaborates this idea of Montfort and says that total belongingness to each other in the Covenant of Love takes place through the mutual exchange of interests, goods and hearts, which is nothing but a perfect gift of self.¹²²⁹

¹²²⁴ Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 67.

¹²²⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 66-67.

¹²²⁶ Ibid., P. 67. In German the three elements (giving up of self, giving of self to other, being given a home in the heart of the other) form a play on words: *Enteignung, Übereignung, Aneignung*. (See: Footnote, No.7, in: Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 67.); These three elements also encompass the four elements of love, namely: loves' mutual surrender, which means giving up of self out of love (*Liebespreisgabe*); love's mutual devotion, which means giving up of self to the other out of love (*Liebeshingabe*); love's mutual transmission, which means the passing on of love, letting one's love to grow and to encompass others (*Liebesweitergabe*) and love's mutual claims, which means the claims of love (*Liebesansprüche*). (Cf., *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, P. 263, ; Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 32, ; Cf., Footnote, No. 9, in: *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 32.)

¹²²⁷ LSch 1952, II, Pp. 209-210, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus).

¹²²⁸ Cf., *True Devotion to Mary*, 144, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., P. 334.

¹²²⁹ Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 155, ; Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, Pp. 63-66.

By *perfect mutual exchange of interests*, it is meant that through the Covenant of Love the interests of the covenant partners are exchanged and made as one's own possession. It refers to the fact that Mary's interests become our interest and our interests become Mary's interests. Mary's interests are nothing but the interests of her beloved Son Jesus Christ. Her life has no other meaning than just to exist only for her Son and His mission, which consists in building up of God's Kingdom. On the other hand our human interests are manifold interests, which are focused on worldly pleasures, material goods and values. By virtue of the Covenant of Love Mary draws us into the realm of her interests and values as perfect as possible and makes all our interests and cares concerning finance, health, intellect, spiritual life, community life, individual life, educational needs, in short everything which are our field of concerns in our everyday life, as her own. Through the consecration Mary takes on the co-responsibility in a full measure and with great tenderness for every single interest of us and makes them all her own. This means that Mary draws us into the realm of her interests and enables us to possess her interests as our own by helping us to break our sinful habits, by subduing our passions, by standing beside us in the dark and dry moments of our souls, by accompanying us at the moment of our death and by even assisting us in the flames of purgatory. Fr. Kentenich explains this mutual exchange of interests between Mary and us using examples from the life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, of the mother of St. Andrew Corsini (1301-1374), of the mother of St. Elzear (1285-1323) etc. He even refers to the teachings of the Popes concerning the effective role of Mary on this issue. This mutual exchange is one effect of the unique fruitfulness of the Covenant of Love.¹²³⁰ Thus Mary through the Covenant of Love makes every moment of our lives as her own and draws us into her heart, where her sole interests concerning her Son are harboured. Through this fusion of hearts there is "*the intimate two-in-oneness of Mary's heart and my (our) heart(s)*"¹²³¹ created. As a result "*an interior, deep-seated, sacrificing and joy-filled attachment of love to God and his interests*"¹²³² is created within our hearts. "*In this way, the soul ascends from the the attachment to intermediate values to the attachment, the organic attachment to the ultimate value, God*".¹²³³ This caring of Mary for our interests with

¹²³⁰ Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, Pp. 155-158.

¹²³¹ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 65.

¹²³² *Ibid.*

¹²³³ *Ibid.*

great tenderness and love can be expressed through the phrase: “*Mater perfectam habebit curam*”.¹²³⁴

The Covenant of Love is not only a perfect exchange of interests but also a perfect exchange of goods, hearts and love.¹²³⁵ This aspect of the Covenant of Love can be fittingly explained through the consecration prayer “*My Queen, My Mother*”, which is known as the so-called “*Little Consecration*” (*die kleine Weihe*) in Schönstatt. The prayer used as the dedication formula is as follows:

“*My Queen, my Mother,
I give myself entirely to you,
and to show my devotion to you,
I consecrate to you this day
my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart,
my entire self without reserve.
As I am your own, my good Mother,
guard me and defend me
as your property and possession.
Amen.*”¹²³⁶

¹²³⁴ The phrase “*Mater habebit curam*” (Mother will take care) comes from St. Vincent Pallotti. During World War I it came to be a much-used phrase by Father Kentenich and the first Schönstatt sodalists. Later, Father Kentenich would add the word *perfectam*, that is, Mother takes *perfect* care. To those who encounter the phrase elsewhere, it is a help to know that “*habebit*” is the future form (will take care) and “*habebat*” (which occurs now and then) is in the past tense (Mother *took* perfect care). (Footnote, No. 21, in: *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 72); This phrase is commonly and widely used by the entire Schönstatt Family to express the care and love of the Mother Thrice Admirable. It is also known in its short form as Mphc.

¹²³⁵ Cf., *USA-Terziat*, Band II, P. 301. The original text is: „*Letztlich bedeutet Liebesbündnis gegenseitiger Gütertausch, gegenseitiger Herzensaustausch, gegenseitiger Liebesaustausch.*“

¹²³⁶ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 176. **The Origin of the Prayer “My Queen, My Mother”**: Traditionally speaking this short popular form of prayer is attributed to Father Nicholas Zucchi, SJ (1586-1670), who lived in the 17th century. (Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *New Vision and Life*, op. cit., P. 78, ; Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 65, ; Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 97). But this prayer dates back to the 13th century to St. Raymond Nonnatus (c. 1200-1240). He was born in 1200 or 1204 at Portello in the Diocese of Urgel in Catalonia; died at Cardona, 31 August, 1240. (Cf., *St. Raymond Nonnatus*, in: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12671b.htm>, 15. 12. 13.). The prayer “My Queen, My Mother” came into existence as follows: “St. Raymond Nonnatus was born of pious and noble parents, but was especially devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom he consecrated his virginity already as a boy. Educated by Cistercian monks in the Abbey Populeti he applied himself with much effort to the study of the Scriptures and holy discipline, so that it was already admired in the chaste young man the virtue of an adult. Called back by his father, he bid farewell to the abbey not without tears and began to lead a rural life on the desolate estate of his father. On the outskirts of Portelli was a chapel of St. Nicholas, which he entered to visit the sacred image of the Mother of God [*Deipara*]. There he fervently begged the Holy Mother of God to adopt him as her son, praying with these words: From infancy and boyhood without a mother, I have taken refuge in your bosom, Virgin Mother of God; and I have happily chosen you to be my sweetest Mother in perpetuity. I ask you, hear my prayer and kindly accept my petition: *O my Queen, o my Mother, I give myself entirely to you, and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my entire self. As I am your own, o good Mother, guard me and protect me as your property and possession, and accept me into your perpetual servitude. Amen. Amen.*” (See: Footnote, No. 112, in: Sancho Blanco, Amerius, *Alma social Christi*, Rome, 1952, P. 451, translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus from the German translation done by Fr. Andreas Brath and Fr. Josef

We have discussed that the above prayer was already used in the Marian Congregation by the Marian sodalists to renew the act of consecration every day. But the usage of this prayer in Schönstatt has got a deeper meaning. The content of this prayer is concerned as a whole with a mutual covenant, which is the very essence of Schönstatt's covenant spirituality. And hence the members of the Schönstatt Family use this prayer every day, both as individuals and as family to renew the Covenant of Love with MTA, in one form or the other.¹²³⁷ This small prayer is considered as the

Barmettler, October 2010.). The Latin version of this prayer is: *Ab infantia et pueritia matre mea orbatus, Dei Mater Virgo ad gremium tuum confugi; teque laetus in parentem dulcissimam perpetim elegi. Exaudi, quaeso orationem meam, benigni suspice deprecationem meam: O Domina mea, o Mater mea, tibi me totum offero, atque ut me tibi probem devotum consecro tibi, oculos meos, aures meas, os meum, cor meum plane me totum. Quoniam itaque tuus sum, o bona Mater, serva me, defende me, ut rem ac possessionem tuam, et suscipe me in tuam perpetuam servitutem. Amen. Amen.* From the 14th century this *prayer of St. Raymond Nonnatus to the Holy Mother of God [Deipara]* came to be used not only by the Brothers of the Order of Saint Mary, Merciful Ransom of Captives, but also by the Christian faithful, without the first words and beginning with *O my Queen* etc. (See: *Footnote, No. 112*, in: Sancho Blanco, Amerius, *Alma social Christi*, Rome, 1952, Pp. 451-452.). In our times there is a plenitude of images, be it of the Blessed Virgin Mary, be it of St. Raymond Nonnatus with the preceding prayer, with the title: *Prayer of St. Raymond Nonnatus to the Holy Mother of God [Deipara]*, published in Panormi, Messanae, Oriae und Romae, in the years 1735, 1708, 1918 and 1940. (See: *Footnote, No. 112*, in: Sancho Blanco, Amerius, *Alma social Christi*, Rome, 1952, P. 452.). Other Sources referred by Amerius Sancho Blanco are as follows: Sic Genebrardus Dom. Gilbertus O.S.B., in suo: *Sacrae Virgini Mariae deprecationes*, Duaci 1596. Ex officina Balthassaris Belleri, sub Circino aureo. Cum gratia et privilegio. ; Turselino Horatius, S.J. in *Libro: Sanctorum preces Beatae Virgini Mariae*, Romae, 1599. ; Inchofer Melchior, S.J.: *Enchiridium precum sanctorum medii aevi*, Antuerpiae, 1635. Ex Typographia Plantiniana ; Venini Ignazio, S.J.: *Discorso nella festa di S. Raimondo Nonnato del sacro, reale e militare ordine della Madonna della Mercede*. Milano, 1775. Nella Stampa de Successori di Francesco Vigoni ; Papebrochius Daniel, S.J.: *Appendix ad Acta Sanctorum*, Antuerpiae, 1673. Tip. By Gaes. Ioachim Trogonesus. ; Van den Zip, Dom. Zypaeus, O.S.B.: *Orationes ad B. Mariam*, Amstelodami, 1606 ; Ugheli Dom. Ferdinandus, monachus Cisterciensis, O.S.B.: *Brevis Historia devotionis erga sancta Deigenitricem*. Augustae Vindelicorum et Graeca, 1665. (See: *Footnote, No. 112*, in: Sancho Blanco, Amerius, *Alma social Christi*, Rome, 1952, P. 452.)

¹²³⁷ Cf., Ibid. Every time this prayer is renewed by the members of the Schönstatt Family it automatically means to unite oneself with the Covenant of Love made between Schönstatt and the Blessed Mother on 18th October 1914. Fr. Kentenich speaks about this in the USA Tertianship as follows: „Wenn nun schon dieses schlichte Gebet als ein Bündnis, ein Liebesbündnis, als Weihe, als „kleine Weihe“ aufgefaßt werden darf, und zwar schlechthin aufgefaßt werden darf, dann halten wir das in unserem Denken für selbstverständlich, daß das Liebesbündnis, so wie wir es morgens und abends erneuern, letztes Endes weiter nichts ist als eine gewisse Einschaltung in das Bündnis, das die Gottesmutter 1914 mit Schönstatt und das Schönstatt mit der lieben Gottesmutter geschlossen (hat). Das sollte immer ein erneutes subjektives Hineinbeziehen in die Gründungsurkunde (sein). Wenn ich das schon einmal gebrauchte Bild noch einmal verwenden darf: Es ist schier so, als wenn wir jeden Tag erneut unsere Unterschrift geben auf die Gründungsurkunde oder, wenn Sie wollen, unter die Blankovollmacht, die die damalige Gründergeneration der Gottesmutter ausgestellt hat. Damit sind wir sofort mitten hineingezogen in den Lebens- und Liebesstrom der ganzen Familie. Und es liegt auf der anderen Seite, wie ich schon mehrmals hervorgehoben, ungemein viel Trost und Kraft in dem Bewußtsein der Gegenseitigkeit. (Es) ist also ein gegenseitiges Liebesbündnis. Totum pro toto.“ (USA-Terziat, Band II, P. 299.)

expression of mutual and total dedication.¹²³⁸ Therefore let us analyze this dedication formula to understand the depths of the exchange of goods and hearts.

- **“My Queen, My Mother”**

Fr. Kentenich says by addressing Mary as “My Queen, My Mother”, we are acknowledging *“the holistic tendency in a noble woman’s (Mary’s) heart. If she gives herself, if she makes a task her main task in life, her heart is ready to give the last and least drop of its blood.”*¹²³⁹ By this address we also acknowledge her *“as our Queen, as Queen of the universe, as Queen of our hearts.”*¹²⁴⁰ The document on the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church affirms that Mary is the Queen of the universe by stating:

*“Finally, the Immaculate Virgin ... on the completion of her earthly sojourn, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the Universe, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and the conqueror of sin and death.”*¹²⁴¹

This statement implies that Mary forms a unitary principle with her Son and with God. And her Queenship and her Son’s Kingship are inseparable. This further implies that Mary as the Queen of the Universe has got a domain, which is as vast as that of her Son and God.¹²⁴² Mary through her Queenship participates in the Kingship of her Son and holds a mysterious share in helping her Son in His work of salvation. This means that when we address her as “My Queen”, we place everything, all that we are and all that we have, at her disposal and invite her to rule over our lives and our hearts. We entrust to her all our sufferings and crosses because we acknowledge her power as Queen and believe that she will understand our sufferings and will console us in every situation. Fr. Kentenich explains this as follows:

¹²³⁸ Cf., *USA-Terziat*, Band II, P. 299. The original text is: „Ja sogar, wenn Sie darauf achten, dann muß das Gebetlein sogar aufgefaßt werden als Ausdruck der Ganzhingabe, aber der gegenseitigen Ganzhingabe.“

¹²³⁹ Kentenich, Joseph, *Ansprache an Mütter am 12. Mai 1966*, in: *Propheta locutus est*, Vorträge und Ansprachen von Pater J. Kentenich aus seinen drei letzten Lebensjahren, Manuskript, Band IV, 1966, Pp. 255-256, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV). The original text is: „Es ist also hier der Appell an die Ganzheitstendenz eines edlen Frauenherzens. Wenn es sich schon verschenkt, wenn es (sich) schon eine Aufgabe zur Lebensaufgabe macht, dann ist das Herz bereit, das letzte Tröpflein Blut dafür herzugeben.“

¹²⁴⁰ Schoenstatt’s *Covenant Spirituality*, P. 181.

¹²⁴¹ *Lumen Gentium*, No. 59, in:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, 16.12.13.

¹²⁴² See: Chapter 4, the topic on Mary the Queen and its impact on the Marian consecration.

*“She had to become the Queen ... in order to be united as perfectly as possible with Christ in her position as permanent Helpmate of Our Lord. That was so she could, in birth pangs, give birth to us and be able to deeply share in our sufferings. Therefore we can be sure that she understands the suffering of all who have a cross to bear and knows how to console us in every situation in a special way. Yes, she knows how to comfort us, even when she leads us to the cross, which no mortal human can escape.”*¹²⁴³

Thus by crowning her as Queen we entrust to her the entire domain of our lives and request her to establish her rule together with her Son, so that everything, which is unfitting in our lives and in our hearts to the will of God may be ordered and restructured in accordance to the Holy will of God. In the Covenant of Love Mary *“returns the crown to us. In that moment she also makes us little kings and little queens.”*¹²⁴⁴ This elevates our state of life as children of God and members of Christ through baptism.¹²⁴⁵

Mary became our Mother through the last testament of her Son, Jesus Christ. This is the Covenant of Love, which was established by Christ Himself. We renew this covenant every time when we pray the consecration prayer “My Queen, My Mother”¹²⁴⁶ This Mother, whom God has given to us as a gift is endowed with *“motherly power, motherly kindness and motherly wisdom.”*¹²⁴⁷ The motherly power consists in the fact that she has the power over the heart of God. Fr. Kentenich explains it as follows:

*“Mary’s power over the Heart of God has a twofold root. As the Mother of God she can be certain that her wishes and petitions will be heard. As Christ’s permanent Helpmate in the entire work of redemption, as our Mother in the true sense of the word, she has both the position and the power of a co-reigning Queen in the Kingdom of her Son, the King of heaven and earth.”*¹²⁴⁸

By entrusting ourselves in the Covenant of Love to her, we are drawn by her into the realm of her motherly tasks to its fullness. This helps us to experience the truth that:

“she is capable of fulfilling her motherly task in a masterful way, (her task) of nourishing us with every kind of gift and grace, of

¹²⁴³ Mary, our Mother and Educator, P. 94.

¹²⁴⁴ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 183.

¹²⁴⁵ Cf., Ibid.

¹²⁴⁶ Cf., Ibid.

¹²⁴⁷ Mary, our Mother and Educator, P. 95.

¹²⁴⁸ Ibid., P. 90.

*educating us to be as perfect an image of Christ as possible for the glorification of the Father – that should reach the point where we can say, “My life is Christ’s life: ‘The life I live now is not my own, it is Christ living in me.’ (Gal 2, 20)” – and of leading us victoriously as her instruments in her battle against the devil and the world, so that Christ’s dominion be established on earth.”*¹²⁴⁹

Just like any earthly mother, who has the right over her children, so also Mary has the right over us, her children, through the Covenant of Love established by her Son at the foot of the Cross on Golgotha. Fr. Kentenich explains that through our Covenant of Love with her:

*“Mary has the right to our receptiveness, willingness, and openness. If (we acknowledge that) Mary is really our Mother, then it is taken for granted that we, as real and genuine children, be receptive for the graces which she intercedes for us as nourishing strength for our spiritual lives, as well as for all the mercies of God which are offered to us through His guidance and provision in contemporary history, family history, and our everyday lives. It is no more than right and just that we willingly allow her to educate us, even when she takes us to Golgotha and our crucified Lord, and in the Holy Spirit to the Father, and that we be open for every sign which she gives us, and for all the ways in which she leads us as instruments in her hand for the propagation and deepening of the Kingdom of God and to overcome the collectivistic spirit of the times.”*¹²⁵⁰

She does not stop with that. She further:

*“takes on the obligation to mould us through this covenant more and more after the image of her own being. By virtue of the covenant she desires and wishes to assure us and secure for us the character of deep and genuine motherliness and fatherliness.”*¹²⁵¹

Thus by giving ourselves entirely and undividedly to Mary in the Covenant of Love, by approaching her with childlike trust and confidence and by acknowledging her as our Queen and Mother, we can expect that only graces will flow into our lives abundantly. This is because, as St. Bernard points out:

“Mary, the heavenly Virgin, became all things to all men. In the overabundance of her love she made herself debtor to all. She gives access to her mother heart to all, so that all may take part in its fullness of graces. In her the prisoner finds liberation, the sick

¹²⁴⁹ Id.

¹²⁵⁰ Ibid., Pp. 95-96.

¹²⁵¹ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 183.

health, the afflicted consolation, the sinner forgiveness, the just perseverance, the angels joy and bliss."¹²⁵²

- **"I give myself entirely to you"**

By praying these words of the covenant prayer we totally surrender ourselves to Mary without any reservations. Whatever we have discussed on the topic "capital of grace" can be applied here. Since our Covenant of Love is a perfect, mutual exchange of gifts and hearts, Fr. Kentenich says that when we surrender ourselves to Mary through these words, Mary too would respond to us saying: *"I, too, give myself completely and entirely to you, with everything God has given me"*¹²⁵³; *"whenever you give yourself entirely to me, I give myself entirely to you!"*¹²⁵⁴ It is as if both the covenant partners would say: *"What is yours is mine, and what is mine is yours."*¹²⁵⁵ In our covenant with her, we entrust to her our entire misery, our crosses and sufferings of soul mind body, our weakness, our helplessness but also our nobility, good works, merits and positive traits.¹²⁵⁶ In short we place all our interior and exterior faculties, all our faculties of body and soul, all our earthly goods unreservedly at her disposal.¹²⁵⁷ But they are too less when compared with what Mary gives us in return. On her part, Mary, who is the most grace-filled person places all her gifts and graces at our disposal and gives us everything which she possesses. Through the Covenant of Love,

*"Mary gives us everything she calls her own, namely the Child in her arms to whom she has given all her love. She places Him, so to speak, in our hearts and forms us according to His image. She lets the "Ave" resound in our ears, and places the "Magnificat" (Lk 1, 46-55) and the "Ecce Ancilla Domini" (Behold the handmaid of the Lord, Lk 1, 38) upon our lips. In other words, she makes us like unto herself in everything. She implores for us the tongues of the Holy Spirit which enable us to say "Abba, Father!" (Rom 8,15). She offers us the sevenfold sword of her heart, without which we cannot be transformed or become one with our crucified Lord, which is the meaning of our lives. Finally, she lends us the arm of her interceding omnipotence which enables us to ask, confidently and at all times, that our claims of love be fulfilled, and to share in her "omnipotence"."*¹²⁵⁸

¹²⁵² Cf. The Glories of Mary, p. 214, as cited in: *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 95.

¹²⁵³ Id., P. 187.

¹²⁵⁴ Ibid., P. 183.

¹²⁵⁵ *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 158.

¹²⁵⁶ Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, Pp. 184-185.

¹²⁵⁷ Cf., Id., P. 159.

¹²⁵⁸ Ibid., Pp. 158-159.

This mutual exchange between Mary and us balances our human impotence with a kind of divine omnipotence and enables us to find a home at a supernatural realm, which helps us to experience a vibrant life and an inimitable life-process.¹²⁵⁹

- **“And to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you this day”**

These words mean that the devotion to Mary consists in entrusting oneself to Mary entirely without any reservation. This is our fundamental attitude towards Mary for our entire life, but this attitude must become more concrete and practical in our everyday life. And hence our entrustment to Mary must be practiced every day. Fr. Kentenich says that we do not want to simply construct a grand scheme built on daydreams, but work on the concrete level.¹²⁶⁰ What matters for him is to live the consecration to Mary concretely today in our given life situation, which he expresses as follows:

*“What matters is today. We don’t have to think in terms of the rest of our lives, but just of today. I want to live my total self-surrender today, and I want to do this in every way, in the least events of my life.”*¹²⁶¹

The word “today” also applies to Mary in the Covenant of Love. If we give ourselves to Mary each day through the Covenant of Love, she too will give herself to us each day. In our consecration prayer when we pray “I consecrate to you this day” according to Fr. Kentenich Mary will say to us:

*“I, too, consecrate myself to you this day, for the coming twenty-four hours. Today I will take care of you; today I give myself entirely to you. You are never alone. Moreover, it is not only I who am with you. With me, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are also near. In me you have access to all of heaven.”*¹²⁶²

By offering oneself to Mary every day, the human being becomes more concrete and practical everyday in ones strivings towards holiness,¹²⁶³ which enables him to grow more deeply and strongly into the divine reality.¹²⁶⁴

¹²⁵⁹ Cf., *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*, Pp. 184-185.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 187.

¹²⁶¹ *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, P. 256, (translated by: Mary Cole). The original text is: „Auf das Heute kommt es an. Also nicht nur den großen Wurf fürs ganze Leben tätigen, sondern aufs Heute kommt es an. Heute will ich die Ganzhingabe leben, und zwar in allen und auch den kleinsten Situationen meines Lebens.“

¹²⁶² *Id.*, P. 188.

¹²⁶³ Cf., *USA-Terziat*, Band II, P. 299.

¹²⁶⁴ Cf., *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*, P. 188.

- “My Eyes”

In the consecration prayer, giving oneself entirely to Mary becomes more concrete by praying “*I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth....*” It is not just simply praying generally by saying I give *myself* but it is praying more in a concrete manner. So when I pray that I consecrate to you “*my eyes*” it means that I place my eyes with all its activities at the disposal of Mary and she in return gives us her eyes and that she will not rest until *my eyes* have become *Marian eyes*, which are at her service in her mission in the building up of the Kingdom of God.¹²⁶⁵ Here we are dealing with the exchange of eyes. We exchange our “heartless”, “parched”, “withered”, “opportunistic” and “sexually infected eyes” with the eyes of the Mother of God,¹²⁶⁶ “*with her watchful, kind and motherly eyes*”.¹²⁶⁷ So by renewing our little consecration every day,

*“We give our Lady our eyes, and by virtue of the mutual covenant of love she gives us her eyes - first of all in the sense that she looks on us constantly with great warmth, great love, great concern and care.”*¹²⁶⁸

Mary gives us her *kind and merciful eyes* in exchange for our human eyes and they are turned towards us from heaven.¹²⁶⁹ This is because:

*“We have become members of Christ in baptism, (and) it is only natural that Mary sees us so profoundly united with her only-begotten Son. Just as she looks with mercy on her Child and tends and takes care of him, she also concerns herself with the salvation of all her children. She especially looks after those who have given themselves to her as her children in a special way.”*¹²⁷⁰

According to St. Bernard Mary loves us with the same love with which she loved her Son, Jesus Christ.¹²⁷¹ Applying this thought to the eyes of Mary Fr. Kantenich says:

“So when the Mother of God sees me, she sees Our Lord in me; when the Mother of God sees me, it means that the whole warmth

¹²⁶⁵ Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, Pp. 158-159.

¹²⁶⁶ Cf., *Id.*, P. 189.

¹²⁶⁷ *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, P. 257.

¹²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 262, (translated by: Mary Cole). The original text is: „*Wir schenken unsere Augen der lieben Gottesmutter, und kraft des gegenseitigen Bündnisses schenkt sie uns ihre Augen. Zunächst einmal in dem Sinne, daß sie mit großer Wärme, mit großer Liebe, mit großer Sorge und Sorgfalt ständig ihre Augen auf uns gerichtet hält.*“

¹²⁶⁹ Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 189.

¹²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷¹ Cf., *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, P. 259.

of her love serves my personal well being in a very profound sense, in particular the eternal well being of my soul and the well being of all entrusted to my care.”¹²⁷²

Fr. Kentenich assures that all those who have entrusted themselves to Mary through Covenant of Love are always under the watchful eyes of Mary. No matter where they are, her kind and merciful eyes will always watch us. This is explained by him as follows:

“The Blessed Mother follows ... all who have consecrated themselves to her with her loving and concerned gaze, no matter where we are. Her eyes follow all her children, all who have consecrated themselves to her, in every circumstance and situation - no matter whether I am at work, or out on the streets, or if I am in danger.”¹²⁷³

In this entire reflection about the consecration of eyes the most important element for Fr. Kentenich is that our eyes should become like those of Mary. Through our consecration we are given the eyes of Mary, which is the important goal of Mary in the Covenant of Love. He explains this as follows:

“She not only follows us with her motherly gaze, she not only shares in our cares and fears, our destiny and interests - all this moves her motherly heart and shines out of her motherly eyes; her most beautiful goal, as I see it, consists in seeing to it that my eyes become Mary-eyes ... through our consecration, if we take it seriously, we are all given the grace of Mary’s eyes each day. (...) Let me list the qualities (of her eyes): Mary’s eyes are pure eyes, Mary’s eyes are motherly eyes, Mary’s eyes are selfless eyes, and Mary’s eyes are divinized eyes.”¹²⁷⁴

¹²⁷² Ibid., (translated by: Mary Cole). The original text is: „Wenn die Gottesmutter also mich sieht, dann sieht sie in mir den Heiland; wenn die Gottesmutter also mich sieht, dann bedeutet das, die ganze Wärme ihrer Liebe geht tiefer und tiefer auf mein eigenes persönliches Wohl, vor allem auf das ewige Wohl meiner Seele und auf das ewige Wohl all derer, die mir anvertraut sind.“

¹²⁷³ Ibid., P. 262., (translated by: Mary Cole). The original text is: „daß die Gottesmutter...ständig mit wohlwollendem Blicke alle, die sich ihr geweiht, verfolgt - einerlei, wo sie sind, das Auge, das verfolgt alle ihre Kinder, alle Geweihten, in alle Situationen hinein, ob ich auf dem Arbeitsplatze stehe, ob ich auf der Straße bin, ob ich in gefährliche Gelegenheiten komme.“

¹²⁷⁴ Ibid., P. 263., (translated by: Mary Cole). The original text is: „Sie verfolgt nicht nur mit mütterlichem Blicke uns, unsere Sorgen, Nöte, unser Schicksal, die Interessen, die wir haben - all das bewegt ihr Mutterherz und strahlt aus von ihren mütterlichen Augen -, (aber) das schönste Ziel, dünkt mich, besteht darin, dafür zu sorgen, daß auch meine Augen Marienaugen werden. Wir alle erhalten durch unsere Weihe... Tag für Tag die Gnade, Marienaugen geschenkt zu erhalten.... Darf ich (die Marienaugen) aneinanderreihen?: Marienaugen sind reine Augen; Marienaugen sind mütterliche Augen; Marienaugen sind selbstlose Augen; Marienaugen sind durchgöttlichte Augen.“

Thus by giving ourselves to Mary, we allow Mary to transform our eyes into Marian eyes. And we have the responsibility to carry this *“treasure into the world, so that the image of Mary shines in our lives as a reflection of God’s being”*.¹²⁷⁵

- **“My Hands”**¹²⁷⁶

The words “My Hands” do not appear in the little consecration. However it is very interesting to note that wherever and whenever Fr. Kentenich spoke about the little consecration he also spoke about the mutual exchange of hands. Therefore it will not be out of place to discuss about the meaning of exchange of hands at this part of our discussion. Through the mutual giving and receiving in the Covenant of Love, Mary gives me her hands in exchange of my hands. This implies that:

*“Her hands are constantly at work caring for me and those entrusted to my care. So I do not stand alone. It also means, secondly: she will not rest until she has transformed my hands into Mary-hands.”*¹²⁷⁷

Fr. Kentenich explains the role of Mary’s hands in the Covenant of Love using the example of St. Peter the apostle. As Peter began to sink beneath the waves Our Lord by lending His hand reached out and pulled him out of danger. Applying this scene to our lives, we can say that by virtue of our consecration the Mother of God will represent Our Lord, when we find ourselves sinking beneath the waves of fears and dangers in our lives. Through our consecration we have surrendered ourselves and our hands to Mary.¹²⁷⁸ Therefore we can hope and trust that just like Jesus pulled out St. Peter by reaching His hand to him, so also will Mary *“quickly reach out to us as we begin to sink, that she will save us from sinking and draw us, as it were, to the shore and into her own heart”*.¹²⁷⁹ There are situations where our lives turn out to be a stormy sea and we are tossed by fears and dangers, Fr. Kentenich says that in such critical situations of life:

¹²⁷⁵ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 191.

¹²⁷⁶ As far as it is known, Fr. Kentenich has not spoken about the consecration of ears and mouth in detail anywhere in his talks. The only known direct reference to this is: *“She lets the “Ave” resound in our ears, and places the “Magnificat” (Lk 1, 46-55) and the “Ecce Ancilla Domini” (Behold the handmaid of the Lord, Lk 1, 38) upon our lips”*. (Mary, our Mother and Educator, P. 159.) ; Therefore a detailed discussion on this topic is omitted here.

¹²⁷⁷ *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, P. 266, (translated by: Mary Cole). The original text is: *„Ihre Hände sind ständig sorgend in Bewegung für mich und all die Meinigen. Ich brauche also nicht alleine dazustehen. Heißt aber auch zweitens: Sie hat keine Ruhe, bis sie meine Hände zu Marienhänden umgestaltet hat.“*

¹²⁷⁸ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 266-267.

¹²⁷⁹ Ibid., P. 267.

*“The Blessed Mother is able to use her interceding omnipotence to reach out her hand to us and make sure that the tempest passes us by. She will see to it that we do not perish, but that her hands carry us deeper and deeper into the hands of the Triune God.”*¹²⁸⁰

Thus in the Covenant of Love when we give each morning and evening our hands to the Mother of God, we can be sure that Our Lady gives us her hands and her hands will be constantly at work on our behalf. Her hands will be constantly at work not only serving our wellbeing within the frame work of our family but also will be constantly at work to serve all those who are entrusted to our care. But above all through the virtue of the Covenant of Love Mary will constantly work on us until our hands have become Marian hands,¹²⁸¹ which can be described as *“merciful hands, kind hands, intercedingly omnipotent hands. These hands ... are also pure, untouched hands”*.¹²⁸²

We have been so far reflecting and discussing that the Marian consecration in Schönstatt is a perfect mutual exchange of interests, goods and hearts. I give myself to her, and she gives herself to me: Totum pro toto. Before we proceed further it is necessary to mention at this part of our discussion that in the little consecration, when we pray that “I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears, my hands” they refer to the “exchange of goods” between Mary and us. But the most important aspect of this consecration prayer for Fr. Kentenich is that the Covenant of Love is mainly an “exchange of hearts” is. This is one of his favourite topics. Let us now reflect on this topic at its depths.

- **“Our Hearts”**

At the very outset of our reflection we clarify the meaning of the heart. According to Fr. Kentenich *“the core of the personality is not the will, but the heart”*.¹²⁸³ It is *“the embodiment of all the interior faculties which join together with*

¹²⁸⁰ Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 192.

¹²⁸¹ *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, Pp. 269-270.

¹²⁸² Id., P. 193.

¹²⁸³ Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality, P. 194. Fr. Kentenich says: *“In Sacred Scripture, “heart” means the core of the personality. Hence, God’s call in the Old Testament, “Child, give me your heart!” (Prov: 23,26), and Our Lord’s call in the New Testament, “You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength!” (Lk: 10, 27). Christian philosophy proceeds from clarifying the term “heart” to clarifying that of “Gemüt.” Gemüt is where the higher and the lower appetites create a common resonance. From here resonates our fundamental attitude which determines how we react, through emotions or will, to values or objects. The judgment of the intellect is presupposed. “Heart” says essentially the same thing as Gemüt, but with a greater emphasis on the person who possesses this fundamental inner attitude to things, goods, and values.”*

a unique way form and order in this particular individual".¹²⁸⁴ When we speak about Mary's Heart, we don't mean her Heart of flesh just like our human heart, but we refer to:

*"The person of our dear Lady, inasmuch as her heart embodies who she is, inasmuch as she is "all heart" - or to put it differently - inasmuch as she is the personification of love, is a firebrand of love, a firebrand of love for the Eternal God and a firebrand of love for man and for creation. To be even clearer, "Heart" means the entire personality of the Blessed Mother in which all her actions and affection ultimately flow and rush forth from her soul's fundamental vitality, from a boundlessly great and tender love."*¹²⁸⁵

When we pray in the little consecration the words "I consecrate to you this day ... my heart", it refers to the *mutual exchange of hearts*. This term "*exchange of hearts*" is used by Fr. Kentenich since 1941 to describe the dynamism of love in the consecration.¹²⁸⁶ In this sense he describes consecration, as "*a gift of love, (which) opens my heart to the fullness of life of the other, and opens her heart to receive me with special tenderness*".¹²⁸⁷ He also points out to the privilege, which we human beings receive through the Covenant of Love, namely, the most beautiful gift of the Heart of Mary in exchange to our human heart. This is because "*Our Lady has a pure heart, a God-imbued heart, a merciful heart*"¹²⁸⁸ which is far beyond any comparison with our human heart. Fr. Kentenich describes about the preciousness of the gift of the heart of Mary, which we have received through the consecration as follows:

*"Her heart, our nest, which she has offered to us through the consecration; her heart which always beats warmly for us and where we can always find a sheltering home in every situation of our lives."*¹²⁸⁹

This precious gift of the heart of Mary is the biggest gain for us through the consecration and he describes this gain as follows:

(LSch 1952, II, Pp. 210-211, as cited in: *Exchange of Hearts*, P. 111); see also: The meaning of the word "Heart", its symbolism and its theological difficulties in the 4th chapter.

¹²⁸⁴ LSch 1952, II, P. 211.

¹²⁸⁵ *Exchange of Hearts*, P. 28, ; Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben leben*, Band 3, op. cit., P. 110.

¹²⁸⁶ Cf., *Exchange of Hearts*, Pp. 16-17.

¹²⁸⁷ Ibid., P. 17.

¹²⁸⁸ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 194.

¹²⁸⁹ *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, P. 267, (my translation). The original text is: „*Ihr Herz, das Nest, das sie uns angeboten hat durch die Weihe; das Nest, das Herz, das immer warm für uns schlägt und wo wir allezeit, in allen Situationen, eine bergende Heimat finden.*“

*“We now “have” Mary’s immaculate heart, totally free from sin and totally free for God, meaning that the world of love in her heart can flow more freely into my heart. For her part, Mary also considers the exchange a magnificent “bargain,” for as a Mother it is her greatest joy to receive in an even more conscious and loving fashion the gift of my heart as one of her children, meaning she knows that she can lead me still more closely to Jesus.”*¹²⁹⁰

So, when we speak of the *mutual exchange of hearts* in the Covenant of Love, we mean to say that we inscribe our hearts into the heart of the Mother of God; it is an immersion of our hearts into her heart.¹²⁹¹ Through this exchange Mary,

*“assumes the responsibility, the obligation, to make our cold hearts warm again, to make our hearts of stone soft again. She gives a clear answer to the petition spoken in Sacred Scripture: “Make my heart of stone into a heart of flesh” into a warm, humanly beating heart, into a loving, godly and God-like heart.”*¹²⁹²

Fr. Kentenich is of the firm opinion that this heart of Mary has assumed her responsibility from the very moment when Our Lord spoke the words from the Cross: “Behold your Mother”. Since then it is constantly devoted to us in a unique way allowing us, her children to relish her love abundantly.¹²⁹³

The heart, which Mary gives to us in the Covenant of Love, is pure, humble, magnanimous and filled with ardent love. By virtue of the Covenant of Love a mysterious fusion takes place between our heart and the heart of Mary. As a result all the qualities of Mary’s heart is given to us by her and she constantly works to purify our love for her and for God in its intentions and expressions.¹²⁹⁴ According to Fr. Kentenich:

¹²⁹⁰ *Exchange of Hearts*, P. 17.

¹²⁹¹ Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben leben*, Band 3, P. 111.

¹²⁹² *Exchange of Hearts*, P. 28, ; Ibid.

¹²⁹³ *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, P. 273. The description of Fr. Kentenich on this point in the original text is: „Wenn wir uns daran erinnern, daß die Worte Gottes bewirken, was sie sagen, was muß dann das Wort bewirkt haben, das der Heiland vom Kreuze aus sagte: „Siehe da, deine Mutter!“ (Joh 19,27). Ja, wenn das wahr ist, wenn die Worte Gottes bewirken, was sie sagen, dann halten wir es für selbstverständlich, daß seit diesem Augenblicke das Herz der lieben Gottesmutter ein endloser Ozean von warmer und wärmster Liebe war; und zwar einer doppelten Liebe: Liebe zu Gott, Liebe zum Heilande und Liebe zu den Menschen. Mater ter admirabilis, Dreimal Wunderbare Mutter und Königin von Schönstatt! Und dieses warme Herz hängt allezeit an uns! Und wir dürfen nicht übersehen, daß die Gottesmutter sich diese Liebe zu uns etwas hat kosten lassen. (Das) ist sogar ein wichtiges Moment, das die Marienliebe in uns dynamisch macht. Das ist nicht nur irgendwie etwas x-Beliebigen, schnell Hingeworfenes. Sie hat es sich etwas kosten lassen. Inwiefern etwas kosten lassen? Ihren eingeborenen Sohn hat sie für uns am Kreuze für mich und für Sie hingegeben! (Sie) hat sich (das) etwas kosten lassen. Wiederum: So ist ihr Herz in einzigartiger Weise ständig am Schlagen für uns.“

¹²⁹⁴ Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 169.

*“Love for Mary and love for God go hand in hand; they increase and decrease together. The purity of such an intention makes and keeps the human heart and human life chaste and pure, truthful and just.”*¹²⁹⁵

He also asserts that through this fusion our unhealthy and sickly heart is drawn into her supremely healthy heart and she sees to it that our sickly heart becomes more and more like her heart. Fr. Kentenich explains it as follows:

*“She possessed a heartfelt, well-ordered love. (...) Her heart was filled with a personal love, with a love which gave all things the right place in head and heart and was therefore a satisfied and satisfying love. She could therefore cry out to the world and to the ages, “All generations will call me blessed!” (Lk: 1,48). (...) Mary’s heart and ability to love were healthy; our heart and ability to love are sick. (...) A Marian heart is truly a happy heart, even when it is pierced, even when it is financially poor ... because it loves in the right way. If only we could love the right way! Then we would also understand the full significance of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A fusion of hearts, an exchange of hearts, a union of hearts. My sick heart is swept into the heart of our dear Lady. And she sees to it that my heart becomes more and more like hers.”*¹²⁹⁶

This is exactly the meaning and purpose of mutual love because through its unifying and assimilating power it transmits life to the other, which results in the exchange of hearts.¹²⁹⁷ Fr. Kentenich says that this is exactly the purpose of making Covenant of Love with Mary. He explains this as follows:

“This is why we have consecrated ourselves to the Mother of God, why we have made a covenant of love with her under the symbol of the heart – a mutual covenant of love. Of course, it is not enough to just make such a covenant; we must also live and love this covenant, fostering an exchange of hearts and doing everything so that the exchange of hearts between our hearts and the heart of Mary will become as perfect as possible. (...) If my heart is exchanged with that of our dear Lady, then I participate in her supremely healthy heart. And within this supremely healthy heart of Mary beating in my heart, in my breast, is a powerful attraction urging it on to the Heart of Christ and into the Heart of the Heavenly Father! (...) When the hearts have been exchanged, then Our Lady will give us something of her supremely personal love, so that we can say: Our hearts are on the way to becoming healthy again, to learning how to love in a healthy manner. (...) And when our hearts are healthy again, when we have learned once more to

¹²⁹⁵ Ibid., Pp. 169-170.

¹²⁹⁶ *Exchange of Hearts*, Pp. 37-38, ; Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben leben*, Band 3, Pp. 125-126.

¹²⁹⁷ Cf., *Exchange of Hearts*, P. 38.

*love in a personal way, then we are on the best path to renewing the world and to supporting the renewal of the human family today.”*¹²⁹⁸

Thus from the above discussion we can conclude that the mutual exchange of hearts through the Covenant of Love wins us graces of transformation. She continues to work on our personality and will not rest until we have become an *altera Maria*, until her Marian heart beats within our breasts.¹²⁹⁹ Through the graces of transformation Mary generates divine life within our hearts, nourishes it constantly with graces and effectively educates us for our mission in the Kingdom of God.¹³⁰⁰ The exchange of heart by virtue of the Covenant of Love also enables us to “*share in the power of our covenant partner, in the power of Our Lady, of Christ, and of the Triune God. Through it we have influence over their hearts.*”¹³⁰¹ It leads to a “three-in-oneness” where “*the one who is consecrated can rightly say: Three Hearts and one beat.*”¹³⁰²

- **“Guard me and defend me as your property and possession”**

The little consecration ends with a petition requesting her to “*Guard me and defend me as her property and possession.*” This means to say to Mary that since you have accepted me through consecration as I am, therefore you have to take care of me, just the way you take care of yourself.¹³⁰³ This could also be seen as the claim of love by the covenant partner in the consecration. Through this petition the one who has consecrated himself/herself to Mary considers and treats oneself, with everything what he/she is and has, as belonging of Mary. The consecrated person wants Mary to have ownership over him in every way and wanted to live under her protection. This implies that the one who has consecrated will use everything what he/she possesses, from then on, only with her permission.¹³⁰⁴ In other words this is to say the consecrated person wishes to live,

“only in constant dependence on her and her wishes and principles, and not according to one's own self-seeking and high-handed estimation or according to the superficial standards of the

¹²⁹⁸ *Exchange of Hearts*, Pp. 45-46, ; Kentenich, Joseph, *Aus dem Glauben leben*, Band 3, Pp. 136-137.

¹²⁹⁹ Cf., *Propheta locutus est*, Band IV, P. 274.

¹³⁰⁰ Cf., *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, P. 169.

¹³⁰¹ *Exchange of Hearts*, P. 115.

¹³⁰² *Ibid.*, P. 114.

¹³⁰³ Cf., *USA-Terziat*, Band II, Pp. 299-300.

¹³⁰⁴ Cf., *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 65.

*world - i.e. the standards of excess pleasure, possession, and power.*¹³⁰⁵

Thus we can conclude our reflection on the little consecration by saying that in this short prayer the two-in-oneness of Mary's heart and our heart remain as the pulse of our consecration. The fusion of hearts of the covenant partners takes place through the mutual exchange of interests, goods and hearts. Herein lies the covenantal character of the prayer. The mutual exchange indicates that whatever we give to Mary, she also gives us in return the same. Through this mutual exchange, the graces of transformation are bestowed on the one who is consecrated, which helps the soul of the consecrated person to detach himself/herself from all that is worldly and profane, to detach himself/herself from self-centeredness and from all that is earthbound. At the same time the transforming power of consecration helps the soul to get itself attached to the interests, desires and love of God in a joy-filled manner. Through the mutual exchange and fusion of hearts Mary helps the consecrated soul to become like her and like her Son and enables the soul to have a perfect and holistic integration in God, in everything and persons. Thus our reflections on the little consecration help us to understand that Covenant of love is a perfect, mutual gift of self to the other.¹³⁰⁶

The uniqueness of the little consecration lies in the covenantal character of the prayer. We have seen that this prayer was commonly used in the Marian Congregation but the covenantal character contained in the prayer never became a central thought and it is developed by the rich content, which was given to it by Fr. Kentenich. He developed this consecration prayer creatively into a Covenant of Love in Schönstatt based on the covenant concept. Fr. Kentenich explains this as follows:

*“Wenn auch alle Kongregationen die Weihe so auffassen, (die) Eigenart Schönstatts besteht darin, dass es dieser Weihe, diesem Bündnisse, einen eigenartigen Inhalt gegeben und die Weihe als Liebesbündnis zum Zentralgedanken der ganzen Familie gemacht (hat), zu einem Zentralgedanken, der auf der ganzen, ganzen Linie, nach allen Richtungen bis zum Äußersten durchdacht und durchgeführt wurde.”*¹³⁰⁷

The consecration prayer, known as the “little consecration” plays a key role in the entire Schönstatt Family all over the world and the members of the Schönstatt

¹³⁰⁵ Ibid., ; *Maria, Mutter und Erzieherin*, Pp. 314-315.

¹³⁰⁶ Cf., Id., Pp. 65-66.

¹³⁰⁷ *Propheta locutus est*, Band VI, P. 295.

Family pray this little consecration every morning and evening as a sign of renewal of their Covenant of Love with the MTA. However, I am of the firm opinion that the following prayer from Heavenwards, which is known as the “*Morning Offering*” (*Gute Meinung*) expresses more clearly the notion of the *mutual exchange of interests, goods and interests* when compared with the little consecration. Let us take a look at this prayer.

*“What I bear and endure,
 what I say and what I dare,
 what I think and what I cherish,
 all the merits that I gain,
 what I direct and what I conquer,
 all my joys and all my sorrows,
 what I am and what I have
 I give to you as a gift of love.
 Use it so that the holy stream of graces
 flowing richly from the shrine
 may fill the souls of those
 who have given their hearts to Schönstatt
 and gently lead there all those
 whom you wish to choose in kindness
 accept everything
 that our efforts may be fruitful
 which we dedicate to the Trinity.”*¹³⁰⁸

In the little consecration there is only the mentioning of consecrating oneself entirely to Mary by listing the objects of consecration and it concludes with a petition for protection. The mutual aspect, which is the fundamental principle, is not clearly expressed in this prayer. But the prayer of “Morning Offering” expresses the mutual exchange in clear terms. It expresses that whatever we place at Mary’s disposal through consecration is considered as capital of grace and that she may use

¹³⁰⁸ *Heavenwards*, P. 17. The original version is:

*„Was ich trage und ertrage,
 was ich sage, was ich wage,
 was ich sinne, was ich minne,
 an Verdiensten ich gewinne,
 was ich leite und erstreite,
 was mir wird zum Leid, zur Freude:
 Was ich bin und was ich habe,
 schenk ich dir als Liebesgabe
 für die heilige Gnadenquelle,
 die vom Heiligtum rauscht helle,
 um die Seelen zu erfassen,
 die ihr Herz in Schönstatt lassen,
 alle mild dorthin zu führen,
 die du gnädig willst erküren,
 daß die Werke gut gedeihen,
 die wir dem Dreifaltigen weihen.“* (*Himmelwärts*, P. 16.)

everything we give to her for her mission for the world from her shrine. The entrustment to Mary is not expressed through the word “consecration” but expressed as “gift of love” in the “Morning Offering”. This is exactly what the Covenant of Love means: a “gift of love”. The important element of Marian consecration in Schönstatt is that it is attached to the shrine. This principle idea is also clearly expressed in the “Morning Offering”. The beauty of this prayer is that it has the Trinitarian element in it. It ends saying that “all our efforts may be fruitful which we dedicate to the Trinity. This particular element is missing in the little consecration. It implies that whatever we entrust to Mary will be ultimately led to the Triune God by Mary. Hence the Covenant of Love does not stop with Mary but finds its fulfillment in the Triune God. This is one of the important aspects of the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt. Based on all these reasons the “Morning Offering” in Heavenwards should be considered as the original Schönstatt prayer, which expresses the notion of the Covenant of Love and therefore can be promoted as Schönstatt’s consecration prayer to renew our Covenant of Love with the MTA.

VI.5.3.6. The Trinitarian aspect of the Covenant of Love

Another important originality of the Covenant of Love lies in the fact that Mary leads us through the Covenant of Love in the Holy Spirit to Christ and to God the Father. This Trinitarian aspect strikes the keynote in the Covenant of Love. This is expressed in his vindication in the year 1935 where Fr. Kentenich says:

*“Das war um das Jahr 1935. Die damaligen Überlegungen, die angestellt wurden, haben zumal der gesamten Priesterbewegung tief eingeimpft in das lebendige Bewußtsein, daß die Weihe, die Weihe an die Gottesmutter und damit die Weihe an den dreifaltigen Gott der Grundton, (die) Grundidee der gesamten Familie ist. Und deswegen (entstand) zunächst eine wachsende Weihebewegung.”*¹³⁰⁹

We have already discussed that the Covenant of Love with Mary is an original form for the deepening the baptismal covenant. This baptismal covenant is seen by Fr. Kentenich as our covenant with Christ and with God the Father. Therefore he says that the Covenant of Love with Mary leads us to the Covenant with the Triune God. He explains this as follows:

“For us, the covenant of love with Our Lady ... is a penetrating renewal, confirmation and consolidation of our baptismal

¹³⁰⁹ *Propheta locutus est*, Band VI, P. 296, (my emphasis).

covenant, i.e., our covenant with Christ and Triune God. (...) It is equivalent to a deeper penetration into an intimate communion of love between us and himself (Christ) and the Triune God."¹³¹⁰

In the First Covenant of Love with Mary on October 18, 1914, Mary was invited to change the old chapel into a place of pilgrimage from where she could distribute the graces to all those who come there. One could raise the question here: Was this the sole purpose of entering into the Covenant of Love with Mary? The answer to this question could be found in one of Fr. Kentenich's talks during the October Week 1945 in Schönstatt, in which he highlighted the purpose of entering into a Covenant of Love with Mary. According to him the main purpose of making a Covenant of Love with Mary is to make a Covenant of Love with the Trinity. This he explains as follows:

*"Der Sinn der Weihe ist weiter nichts als ein Liebesbündnis mit der Gottesmutter, ein Liebesbündnis, ein Schutzverhältnis; darin ist alles enthalten: ein Bund, ein Liebesbündnis. (...) Gott hat den Bund geschlossen und will einen neuen Bund mit der Menschheit schließen. **Die Gottesmutter ist der Bündnispartner, und in ihr schließen wir den Bund Gott gegenüber; deshalb schließen wir zunächst den Bund mit ihr.**"*¹³¹¹

*"Dadurch, dass sich die Welt der Gottesmutter weiht, aus Liebe das Bündnis eingeht mit der Gottesmutter, geht sie sicher auch das Bündnis mit der ewigen Weisheit und mit dem dreifaltigen Gott ein."*¹³¹²

What is fundamentally important for Fr. Kentenich is not the Covenant of Love with Mary but the Covenant of Love with the Triune God. And hence we can say that the ultimate goal of the Covenant of Love with Mary is the Covenant of Love with the Triune God and to achieve it we enter into Covenant of Love with Mary.

Fr. Kentenich spoke about the spirit of the Founding Documents during the *Crowning Week* in Schönstatt in 1946. At the very outset he affirms convincingly that the spirit of the Founding Documents is nothing but:

"the perfect Covenant of Love of Mother Thrice Admirable with Schönstatt, which assumes its original character through perfect

¹³¹⁰ LSch 1952, II, Pp. 57-58, (translated by: Father Jonathan Niehaus).

¹³¹¹ Kentenich, Joseph, *Hier war Gott: Chronik 1939-1945, Oktoberwoche 1945*, bearbeitet von Heinrich M. Hug, Schönstatt 1999, P. 360, (my emphasis).

¹³¹² Ibid., P. 362.

faith in the Divine Providence and which becomes effective in perfect mission consciousness."¹³¹³

But he does not stop with that. He proceeded to say that the Covenant of Love with Mary has grown into a Covenant of Love with the Holy Trinity. He explains this as follows:

*"Das Liebesbündnis mit der Gottesmutter ist mehr und mehr geworden ein Liebesbündnis mit dem Heiland, mit Gottvater, dem Heiligen Geist, dem dreifaltigen Gott. (...) Sie hat die Familie hineingeführt in das entsprechende bräutliche Liebesbündnis mit dem Heiland, (das Liebesbündnis mit) dem Vater und dem Heiligen Geist. Das ist der Geist der Gründungsurkunde und der Gründungsurkunden."*¹³¹⁴

And in the same talk he explained that the message of Schönstatt, just like the message of Fatima consists in leading the world into a deeper Covenant of Love with Mary so that the Covenant of Love with the Holy Trinity may be strengthened and deepened. He explains this by saying:

*"Man spricht heute so gerne von der Botschaft von Fatima. Hat nicht auch Schönstatt eine Botschaft? Worin sie besteht? Die Welt wieder hineinzuführen in dieses tiefgreifende Bündnis mit der lieben Gottesmutter, damit das Liebesbündnis mit dem Vater, dem Sohn und dem Heiligen Geist ein unverlierbares, tiefes, unzerreißbares wird und bleibt."*¹³¹⁵

At this point of our discussion the following questions may be raised: Why should one enter into a Covenant of Love with Mary in order to enter into a Covenant of Love with the Blessed Trinity? Why cannot we straight away enter into a Covenant of Love with the Holy Trinity? One can find an answer to these questions in the talks given by Fr. Kentenich during the October Week 1947. He says that the surest and the easiest way to enter into a Covenant of Love with the Holy Trinity is by entering into a Covenant of Love with Mary, which makes the Covenant of Love with the Holy Trinity more fruitful and lasting. He asserts it as follows:

"Es war ein Schachzug der göttlichen Gnade ... dass wir zunächst das Liebesbündnis mit der Gottesmutter erstrebten als leichtesten und sichersten Weg, um zum Liebesbündnis mit dem Dreifaltigen Gott zu gelangen. (...) Das Liebesbündnis mit der lieben

¹³¹³ Kentenich, Pater Josef, *Krönung Mariens*, op. cit., P. 62, (my translation). The original text is: „ein vollkommenes Liebesbündnis, das originell geprägt wird durch vollkommenen Vorsehungsglauben und sich auswirkt in vollkommenem Sendungsbewusstsein.“

¹³¹⁴ Ibid., Pp. 63-64.

¹³¹⁵ Ibid., Pp. 64-65.

Gottesmutter hat den Zweck, unser Liebesbündnis mit dem Heiland und dem Dreifaltigen Gott zu einem gesicherten, dauernden und fruchtbaren zu machen."¹³¹⁶

The underlying fact from all these explanations of Fr. Kentenich is that: the Covenant of Love leads us finally to the Holy Trinity and therefore it can be said that Covenant spirituality is a Trinitarian spirituality. Fr. Kentenich marks this undeniable truth in his talk in Milwaukee with the following words:

“Unser Liebesbündnis mit der lieben Gottesmutter soll also tiefer und tiefer ausmünden in das Liebesbündnis mit dem Vater. Und wenn schon Vater, dann ist es selbstverständlich, assoziiert das sofort die Dreifaltigkeit. (...) Deswegen, unsere ganze (Bündnis) Frömmigkeit ist ausgesprochene Dreifaltigkeitsfrömmigkeit."¹³¹⁷

We understand from the strong accent of Fr. Kentenich that Mary in Schönstatt is not only seen as the official and permanent associate and helpmate of Christ in His entire work of salvation but this is also seen as an expression for the Triune God. She is in the eyes of Fr. Kentenich truly an expression of the Covenant of Love with Christ and the Triune God. And hence he says that by entrusting ourselves to Mary we deliver ourselves to God the eternal Father and to Our Lord. Mary becomes our means to Christ and to the Blessed Trinity. By entrusting ourselves to Mary through the Covenant of Love, Mary not only becomes our means to enter into an indissoluble relation with Christ and with the Triune God but also becomes the greatest protection of our Covenant of Love and ultimate expression of our tender devotion and our exchange of hearts with the Savior and the Blessed Trinity.¹³¹⁸ By using the image of a *magnet* Fr. Kentenich explains that God uses Mary as a magnet to draw the hearts of the people towards himself. But at the same time he also sees that it is her task to draw the hearts of human beings close to her and then to lead them into the heart of the Triune God. Fr. Kentenich explains this as follows:

“Der liebe Gott will die Gottesmutter, unsere Dreimal Wunderbare Mutter und Königin von Schönstatt, wie sie hier im Heiligtum wohnt und thront, benutzen als Magnet. Ja, Gott will sie als Magnet benutzen, durch sie die Menschen an sich ziehen, damit der Dreifaltige Gott diese Herzen aus den Händen, aus dem Herzen der lieben Gottesmutter annimmt. (Das) Liebesbündnis mit ihr will also in unserem Denken sein ein Ausdruck des Liebesbündnisses mit

¹³¹⁶ Kentenich, Pater Joseph, *Strategie des Liebesbündnisses*, op. cit., Pp. 182-183.

¹³¹⁷ *Desiderio Desideravi*, Band XI, P. 222.

¹³¹⁸ Cf., *Propheta locutus est*, Band X, Pp. 127-128.

dem Heiland und dem Dreifaltigen Gott, will gleichzeitig sein ein Schutz dieses Liebesbündnisses mit dem Dreifaltigen Gott und mit dem Heiland und will letzten Endes sein eines der allersichersten Mittel, dass diese so gezeichneten jugendlichen Herzen das Liebesbündnis mit dem Dreifaltigen Gott und dem Heiland schließen und nie verletzen. (....) Wir hängen an ihr, weil das der Wunsch Gottes ist; wir hängen an ihr, weil das ihre Aufgabe ist, die Herzen der Menschen an sich zu ziehen, aber nicht, um sie bei sich zu lassen, sondern in ihrem Herzen sie weiterzutragen in das Herz des dreifaltigen Gottes."¹³¹⁹

The symbolic representation of the Blessed Trinity in connection with the picture of Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen is found in the sanctuary of the shrine in all the overseas countries. It symbolizes the universal nature of our spirituality, which is summarized in the motto: ¹³²⁰ *"Per Mariam ad Jesum, per Christum in Spiritu Sancto ad Patrem [Through Mary to Jesus, through Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Father]."*¹³²¹ Therefore we can say that the Schönstatt spirituality is Marian and it is distinctively Trinitarian in its nature.

Thus from the above reflections about the Trinitarian aspect of the Covenant of Love, we can come to the conclusion that *"the covenant of love with our dear Blessed Mother is the most perfect guarantee that we will seriously live the covenant of love with Christ and God the eternal Father."*¹³²² This Trinitarian aspect of the Covenant of Love in its above depicted details is unique in the tradition of the Church. Of course one cannot overlook the strong emphasis of Montfort on the Holy Trinity in relation to the consecration to Mary. His main accent was on the dependence of the Holy Trinity on Mary and how the Holy Trinity is active in and through Mary. His accent was also on the fact how the members of the Holy Trinity distribute the gifts and graces to the human beings through the person of Mary.¹³²³ But Montfort never spoke about the reality of being led by Mary to the Triune God through the consecration. He always upheld the reality "in and through Mary to God". But for Fr. Kentenich it is much more than that. By virtue of the Covenant of Love we are led by Mary in the Holy Spirit to Christ and to God the Father. In short:

¹³¹⁹ Kentenich, Josef, *Im Bund mit dem Dreifaltigen: Ausgewählte Texte zum Gnadenjahr 2000*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 1999, Pp. 132-133.

¹³²⁰ Cf., LSch 1952, I, Pp. 99-100.

¹³²¹ *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality*, P. 99.

¹³²² Kentenich, Josef, *Im Bund mit dem Dreifaltigen*, P. 133, (my translation). The original text is: „(Das) Liebesbündnis mit der lieben Gottesmutter ist die vollendetste Sicherheit für das Ernstnehmen des Liebesbündnisses mit dem Heiland und dem ewigen Vatergott.“

¹³²³ Cf., True Devotion of Mary, Nos. 5, 14-39, 140, in: Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *God alone*, op. cit., Pp. 292, 294-300, 332.

The Covenant of Love with Mary leads us to the Covenant of Love with the Blessed Trinity, which is the ultimate goal of making the Covenant of Love with Mary. This is a new and original concept in the tradition of the Church.

VI.5.3.7. The universal character of the Covenant of Love

The Covenant of Love with Mary, which came into existence on October 18, 1914, grew in its depths, heights, breadth and length, just like the structure of human relationships get deepened, renewed, extended and developed in course of time. This could be straight away compared with the changes, which take place in a human family. In any human family, the human bond of love between the parents gets expanded or extended when a child is born and continues to grow, change, and develop, when more children are born. This does not mean that the original bond of love between the parents is lost but they are indeed integrated into the existing structure of relationship in the family. This is exactly what happened in the Schönstatt Family too.¹³²⁴ The Covenant of Love, which had its own original intrinsic character in the year 1914, unfolded all its realities dynamically and developed into an *original universal organism* over the years and continued to grow further into all dimensions. And this universal organism of the Covenant of Love remains always rooted in the First Covenant of Love in 1914. Therefore we can say that the universal Covenant of Love is very original to Schönstatt in the broader sense.¹³²⁵ The originality of the universal character of the Covenant of Love is well described by Fr. Kentenich in the so-called “Third Founding Document,” which originated in Dachau in 1944, consisting of three conferences given by Father Kentenich on September 24, October 18, and December 8. These three talks of Fr. Kentenich are seen together as the Third Founding Document.

Fr. Kentenich described the fully unfolded reality of the universal Covenant of Love in his talk on December 8. At the very beginning of his talk he explains that the birth of the universal Covenant of Love in Schönstatt was a historical growth. He says:

“Everything which was laid down in the grand scheme of 1914 has become more clearly developed since 1939 through the Second Founding Document, and has ripened to full maturity through the Third Founding Document of 1944. (...) The trend to universality,

¹³²⁴ Cf., King, Herbert, *Marianische Bundesspiritualität*, op. cit., P. 43.

¹³²⁵ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 44-45.

which has long been at work in our family in a functional way, has taken on a definite and consciously strived-for, “lived-for” form in 1944.”¹³²⁶

Fr. Kentenich uses the image of a tree to explain this historical growth of the universal Covenant of Love in all its dimensions. He explains it as follows:

*“The seed which was sown in Schönstatt in 1914 has matured by slow and organic development into a mighty tree. (...) Today this tree is sprouting a new and fruitful branch - our group. In every regard it is of one stock with the tree from which it shoots. It is therefore with the same fervor of the consecration in October that [this group] consciously adopts the [idea of] universality and makes it its clearly recognized and resolutely pursued program for life. In fact, it has gone even further. It has extended this universality in every dimension: **into the depths, into the heights, the length and breadth**, as a glance at their chosen symbol unmistakably reveals.*”¹³²⁷

Thus from the above passage it is very evident that the universality of the Covenant of Love consists in the four-fold dimensions, namely: *the depths, the heights, the length and the breadth*. Getting tuned into the thought of his founder, St. Vincent Pallotti, Fr. Kentenich would call these four-fold dimensions as “*four-fold infinitism*”. One should not forget the fact that Fr. Kentenich was a Pallottine priest and therefore he was inspired by his founder’s life, teaching and spirituality. His reflections on the universal character of the Covenant of Love are fundamentally based on St. Pallotti’s train of thought on “*infinitism*”. In his talk, Fr. Kentenich says: “*Vincent Pallotti would use the word **infinitism**. We want to adopt his word, but understand infinitism in the sense of what we have called universality*”.¹³²⁸ Before we proceed further it is necessary at this part of our discussion to explore in brief on the thought of “*infinitism*” according to St. Pallotti, so that we may grasp the influence of this thought on Fr. Kentenich’s reflection about the universality of the Covenant of Love.

Fr. Kentenich in his talks during October 1949 explains in detail about the characteristic trait of “*infinitism*” in the life of his founder, St. Pallotti. He says: the most original imprint on the being of St. Pallotti is marked by his tendency towards

¹³²⁶ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., Pp. 97-98, ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., Pp. 73-74.

¹³²⁷ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 98, (my emphasis), ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., Pp. 74-75.

¹³²⁸ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 98, ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 75.

infinitism. He was taken up by the reality of *divine* and *supernaturalism* so much that Fr. Kentenich says, that every fibre of his being was pointing emphatically towards God. He expresses it as follows:

“Was seinem Wesen vor allem eignet, was seiner Seele das originellste Gepräge gibt, ist der Zug zum Unendlichen. Das Jenseitige, das Göttliche, das Übernatürliche hat es ihm angetan: aber alles unter dem Gesichtspunkte des Unendlichen. Das Endliche, Kreatürliche, Irdische waren für ihn stets vom Schimmer des Unendlichen überstrahlt, war nur Spiegel und Wegweiser, Transparent und Tor. Darum faßt er es auch weniger in seinem Eigen- als vielmehr in seinem Symbolwert auf. So erklärt sich beides gleichzeitig in seinem Leben: seine Nähe und seine Ferne zu allem Irdischen, zu allem Geschöpflichen, zu allem Diesseitigen. Sein Werk darf als sein erweitertes Ich aufgefaßt werden. Deshalb allüberall der Universalismus und die Unendlichkeits-Tendenz, so wie die dritte Gründungsurkunde sie kündigt: Universalismus der Höhe und Tiefe, der Breite und der Länge. (...) Pallotti weist nachdrücklich mit jedem Fäserchen seines Seins nach oben: Sursum corda!”¹³²⁹

The urge towards infinitism was the ruling factor in the life of St. Pallotti. This ruling factor influenced every sphere of his life and teaching, which Fr. Kentenich expresses as follows:

“Der Unendlichkeitsdrang hat in Pallotti alles beherrscht: sein Denken und Wollen, sein Lieben und Handeln. Er gab vor allem seinem Gottes-, Menschen- und Gemeinschaftsbilde das besondere Gepräge.”¹³³⁰

The strong trait of infinitism in the life of St. Pallotti influenced his image of God to a great extent. His image of God is: *“He is infinite, immense and incomprehensible”*.¹³³¹ The infinite reality of God is perceived by him as the mystery of love. Therefore he says: the infinite God is *“the infinite Love”*.¹³³² He wrote 31 meditations on this topic shortly before his death. In this small booklet the word *“infinitism”* appears 600 times and the words *“infinite love”* appear 190 times.¹³³³ In his meditations, St. Pallotti portrays *God as infinite love* as follows:

“Weil Gott die unendliche Liebe ist, möchte er sich ohne Maß verströmen; denn sein Maß ist die unendliche Liebe. Gott strömt

¹³²⁹ Kentenich, Josef, *Oktoberbrief 1949: an die Schönstattfamilie*, Schönstatt-Verlag, 1970, Pp. 99, 101, (from now on this reference will be mentioned as: *Oktoberbrief 1949*).

¹³³⁰ Ibid., P. 107.

¹³³¹ Ibid., P. 108.

¹³³² Cf., Ibid., P. 109.

¹³³³ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 125-126.

mit unendlicher Liebe aus seinem ganzen Wesen, aus seinen unendlichen Eigenschaften und Vollkommenheiten unendliche Gnaden, Gaben und Erwartungen aus, weil er ganz und gar und in allen seinen Eigenschaften und Vollkommenheiten wesenhafte Güte ist und daher unendlich mittheilbar.”¹³³⁴

It is commonly said that true love always shares and gives itself to the other. From the above quote we understand that St. Pallotti firmly believed that the infinite God offers us himself as infinite love. In other words: Infinite love wants to share itself infinitely. It is a generous love, which reaches out to the other, to the human soul, to give all of itself to the other outside of itself. This infinite love of God is given to us by God as the nourishment for our souls. This is expressed by him as follows:

“Gott ist immer damit beschäftigt, diese Selbstmittheilung in allen Augenblicken, ob wir wach sind oder nicht, vorzunehmen. Durch diesen Erguß empfängt die Seele als ihre Nahrung Gott selbst, denn Gott ist die Speise der Seele ...”¹³³⁵

Love not only shares itself but it also wants a response. Therefore St. Pallotti urges the priests and the religious to take part in this infinite love and to respond to this infinite love. He advises them that their entire life, their words, actions and everything should be nothing but a participation in the infinite love of God and should reflect the infinite love in every way.¹³³⁶ A glance into his advises to the priests will give us a clear picture about it. He advises the priests as follows:

*“Du mußt [...] die seligen Geister nachahmen;
du mußt immerdar sinnend auf die Unendliche Liebe;
mußt beten in der Unendlichen Liebe;
mußt, entzündet von Liebe zur Wesenhaften Liebe, das heilige
Offizium verrichten;
mußt die heiligen Geheimnisse feiern, glühend von Liebe zur
Unendlichen Liebe;
du mußt in Liebe Gottes Wort verkünden,
die heiligen Sakramente spenden in der Liebe zur Unendlichen
Liebe! Deine Speise muß sein die Liebe zur Unendlichen Liebe,
dein Trank die Liebe zur Liebe,
deine Ruhe die Liebe,
dein Streben die Liebe.
Jeder Gedanke in dir sei durchglüht von der Liebe zur Unendlichen
Liebe, jedes Wort entzündet von der Liebe zur Unendlichen Liebe,
jede Handlung umgebildet in Liebe zur Unendlichen Liebe,*

¹³³⁴ Zitiert nach A. Faller, seiner Einführung in: Vinzenz Pallotti, Gott die unendliche Liebe, Rom 1948, S. 26, as cited in: Ibid., P. 125.

¹³³⁵ Ibid.

¹³³⁶ Cf., Oktoberbrief 1949, Pp. 124-125.

*jeder Schritt geschehe aus Liebe zur Unendlichen Liebe,
jede Regung des Herzens sei ein Liebes-Schrei zur Unendlichen
Liebe, jeder Atemzug hauche deine Liebe hin zur Unendlichen
Liebe.
Und so entbrannt von Liebe,
durchtränkt von Liebe,
berauscht von Liebe,
umgewandelt in reinste Liebe zur Unendlichen Liebe,
obwohl ruhig gebettet in Liebe, sollst du überall hin das Feuer der
Liebe tragen und die Herzen hinreißen zur Fülle der Liebe in der
Unendlichen Liebe.*"¹³³⁷

It is worth mentioning at this point how St. Pallotti visualizes Mary in relation to this infinite love. He honours Mary in his book of meditations of the "May Months" with the titles, which are important in the tradition of the Church. They are: "*Mother of merciful compassion*"; "*Queen of the Saints*" and "*Queen of the Apostles*". But in relation to the infinite love he says: Mary is "the living epitome of love for the infinite love and for Christ". From his book of meditations one can very well understand the essential elements of his devotion of Mary. St. Pallotti saw Mary as the perfect model for the Christians, because of her close connection to God, the infinite love, before whom she humbles herself, and because of her close relation with her Son, Christ. She, as heavenly teacher of the spiritual life and leader, leads us to Christ and helps us to become more like him. Therefore the Marian devotion of St. Pallotti is focused on the transformation and renewal of the life of Christians and at the same time it is strongly Christo-centric in its character. The focal point of the Marian spirituality of St. Pallotti is the "*unity of hearts*" (*Herzenseinheit*), which Fr. Kentenich calls a "*fusion of hearts*" (*Herzensverschmelzung*).¹³³⁸ According to St. Pallotti:

"The heart of Mary is completely set on fire with the love for Christ for the people. The union of hearts takes place through the act of consecration to Mary, where our hearts are transferred and dedicated to the Heart of Jesus through the hands of Mary. Through this unification of our hearts, with the heart of Mary, our hearts get ignited and glow with the flames of love of the sacred Heart of Jesus."¹³³⁹

¹³³⁷ Zit. nach FALLER, ANSGAR: *Zur Seligsprechung Vinzenz Pallottis*. (Radioansprache, als Manuskript gedruckt). Neuwied, o. J.; S. 36, in: Fröhling, Edward, „Über alles geliebte Mama und Apostel-Königin“: *Die Gottesmutter Maria im Werk Vinzenz Pallottis*, in: REGNUM 46, III, Internationale Vierteljahresschrift der Schönstattbewegung, 2012, P. 124.

¹³³⁸ Cf., Ibid., Pp. 122-123.

¹³³⁹ Ibid., Pp. 123-124, (translated by: Father Heinz Werner Schneider).

This exchange and unification of hearts through the heart of Mary is also the central theme of the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt.

One may raise the question here and ask: If the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt is so similar to the “*unity of hearts*” of St. Pallotti, then wherein lies its originality? Our answer to this question might be seen in the talk of Fr. Kentenich in his talk during October 1949. He says: Our Covenant of love contains all the elements of his art of Covenant of Love with Mary at the end of 1832. But the fundamental difference lies in the following facts: Fr. Kentenich describes the Covenant of Love of Pallotti as the “*bridal covenant of love*”, which belongs to the realm of mystical order, whereas the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt is a “*childlike covenant of love*”, which belongs to the common order of grace. Unlike St. Pallotti’s Covenant of Love, which has got a *private character*, our Covenant of Love is accessible to every Catholic and can be practiced even commonly. In short it has got a *communitarian character*.¹³⁴⁰

From the above reflections it is very clear that Fr. Kentenich’s understanding of the universal character of the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt is based on the “*Infinitism*” of St. Pallotti but at the same time in the course of time it has become *perfect* in its nature through its historical growth and development. He explains this as follows:

“*Sie (Maria) hat ihn (unseren Unendlichkeitstrieb) stärker und stärker werden lassen. Freilich ging unsere Entwicklung als Gesamtfamilie langsamer vor sich, als das bei Pallotti der Fall war. Lange Zeit mußten wir die erste Gründungsurkunde von 1914 gewissenhaft leben. So wurden wir vor dem Naturalismus bewahrt, die Tore zum Jenseits blieben uns immer geöffnet. Es mußte die zweite Gründungsurkunde dazukommen, die die übernatürliche Einstellung, den Zug ins Unendliche nach allen Seiten hin erweiterte und vertiefte, der erst bei der dritten Gründungsurkunde elementar durchbrechen und unsere Heimat werden konnte. Seither ist das Liebesbündnis mit der lieben Gottesmutter erst zu einem vollkommenen geworden.*”¹³⁴¹

Therefore we can say that the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt is a perfect Covenant of Love because of its *infinite tendency in all directions*, namely at its *depths, height, breadth and length*. This is called the *Universalism* of the Covenant

¹³⁴⁰ Cf., *Oktoberbrief 1949*, P. 103, ; Cf., *Footnote, No. 111b*, in: *Oktoberbrief 1949*, P. 103.)

¹³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, P. 102.

of Love. Now let us proceed to discuss about the universal character of the Covenant of Love.

VI.5.3.7.1. *Universalism in the depth*

Universality or infinitism in depths could be interpreted as a perfect detachment from self to the extent that “*the subconscious life of our souls delivers itself unreservedly and unconditionally as an instrument to the work masters [Jesus and Mary]*”.¹³⁴² This could be summarized as: “*Three hearts and one beat*”.¹³⁴³ In the Founding Document, Mary places her demands on her covenant partner to its highest degree with the words:

*“Each one of us must achieve the highest conceivable degree of perfection and sanctity according to his state of life. Not simply the great and greater, but the greatest heights ought to be the object of our increased efforts.”*¹³⁴⁴

Therefore:

*“The words which the Founding Document places on the lips of Our Lady, “Ego diligentes me diligo” [I love those who love me], may then be interpreted, “Ego perfecte diligentes me **perfecte** diligo” [I love those perfectly who love me perfectly].”*¹³⁴⁵

This indicates that proof of love should consist in striving for perfect love.

*“Accordingly, we want to and we should increase our love to the highest degree and then, as a matter of course, the Blessed Mother will return this love in a perfect way. A perfect covenant of love in terms of **the depth**.”*¹³⁴⁶

This refers to “*a more and more comprehensive gift of self corresponding to the different stages of growth into the covenant of love.*”¹³⁴⁷ The Covenant of Love, which had its beginning on October 18, 1914 took a leap into the depths in the form of a. The *Blank Check* dedication, b. the *inscriptio*, c. the *Joseph Engling* act or

¹³⁴² Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 100, ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 76.

¹³⁴³ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 100, ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 77.

¹³⁴⁴ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., Pp. 29-30, ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 23.

¹³⁴⁵ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., Pp. 101-102, ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 77, (my emphasis).

¹³⁴⁶ *With Mary into the New Millennium*, P. 171, ; Kentenich, Pater Josef, *Krönung Mariens*, op. cit., P. 63.

¹³⁴⁷ Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 52.

consecration.¹³⁴⁸ According to Fr. Kentenich the universalism in depth lies in striving to achieve all these three stages of the Covenant of Love. He expresses it as follows:

*“We therefore distinguish between a first consecration and ... lifetime consecrations. We speak of a “Blank Check”, of the “Inscriptio”, and of a “Joseph Engling Consecration”, and hold it for self-understood that the members of our institutes and federations strive for these three heights of the covenant of love.”*¹³⁴⁹

The Blank Check dedication refers to the Covenant of Love made with the Mother Thrice Admirable on its 25th anniversary, when the Covenant of Love of October 18, 1914 took its first leap into the depth. On October 18th, 1939, the Schönstatt Family sealed a *Blank Check* with the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schönstatt. The reason for this was, on May 1, 1939, the Nazis confiscated the Pallottine Minor Seminary in Schönstatt and converted it into a Nazi education center. There was great fear in the Schönstatt Family of being eradicated by the forces of the Nazis. It was very much feared that the shrine would be closed and the houses in Schönstatt would be destroyed by the Nazis. This would mean a death blow for the Schönstatt Movement. In such a moment of darkness the Schönstatt Family entrusted itself completely in the hands of Mary in the form of Blank Check.¹³⁵⁰ Through the symbol of Blank Check the Schönstatt Family wants to say that:

*“They would “sign over” to Mary utterly everything, including the very uncertain future, and it would be up to her to lead her work through the darkness to whatever victory God had in store.”*¹³⁵¹

The symbolic image of the “*Blank Check*” is taken from the field of finance. It means one can sign a check without specifying the amount, with the implied intention that another party to whom the check is entrusted, will write in the correct amount without cheating the account-holder in any way.¹³⁵² Applying this image to the Covenant of Love Fr. Kentenich says: “*it is conformity with God’s will with*

¹³⁴⁸ Cf., Ibid.

¹³⁴⁹ Schoenstatt’s *Covenant Spirituality*, P. 130.

¹³⁵⁰ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan (ed.), *Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality: Texts by Father Joseph Kentenich*, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1995, Pp. 121- 123, ; *Footnote*, No. 4, in: Niehaus, Jonathan (ed.), *Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality*, Loc. cit., P. 122. (From now on this reference will be mentioned as: *Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality*), ; Cf., *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*, P. 19, ; Cf., *Footnote*, No. 19, in: *Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality*, on P. 131.

¹³⁵¹ Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 53.

¹³⁵² Cf., Ibid.

reference to the incredibly tangled and confused eventualities of the future”.¹³⁵³ In other words, it is to say:

*“In the Blank Check, one consciously places everything which one is and has and whatever God may send, be it joy or suffering, into the hands of the Our Lady as a blank check which she can use as she pleases.”*¹³⁵⁴

Through this Blank Check dedication, the Covenant of Love made its leap into “a more selfless surrender to the wishes and guidance of the covenant partner”,¹³⁵⁵ the Mother Thrice Admirable.

The *Inscriptio dedication* simply means “love of the cross” or “embracing the cross”. It refers to another dimension of the depth in the Covenant of Love. Fr. Kentenich in the Third Founding Document mentions the significance of *Inscriptio* as follows:

*“We want to surrender ourselves to the work masters, Our Lord and Our Lady, not only by offering our wills and minds and memory, but especially by offering our hearts. We are not satisfied with a union of wills. Our aim is higher: We want to strive for a pronounced union of hearts, a perfect fusion of hearts, an **inscriptio cordis in cor** - a perfect inscription of one heart into the other.”*¹³⁵⁶

In the dreadful years of 1940 and 1941 difficulties for the Schönstatt Family increased through the dangerous threats of the Nazis. The situation was turning more dangerous day by day. It was during this time, in the year 1941, that Fr. Kentenich, in one of his talks given to the Schönstatt Sisters of Mary, mentioned this word for the first time. This was the inspiration from which, a new form of Covenant of Love emerged.¹³⁵⁷ The word “*Inscriptio*” comes from “*St. Augustine’s psychological definition of love: Inscriptio cordis in cor*”, which means “the inscription of one

¹³⁵³ Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality, P. 123.

¹³⁵⁴ Footnote, No. 19, in: Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 131.

¹³⁵⁵ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 19.

¹³⁵⁶ Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents, op. cit., Pp. 100, ; Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden, op. cit., P. 76.

¹³⁵⁷ Cf., Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality, Pp. 125-126. „Durch die drohenden Gefahren des Nationalsozialismus sah sich P. Kentenich 1941 veranlaßt, innerhalb der Bewegung zu diesem bedingungslosen Vertrauen der Inscriptio hinzuführen.. Dabei ging es ihm um die geistliche und psychologische Zuriüstung seiner Bewegung für das bevorstehende Leid.“ (Mohr, Daniela, “*Inscriptio*”, in: Brantzen, Hubertus (Hrsg), Schönstatt-Lexikon: Fakten-Ideen-Leben, Patris Verlag, 1996, P. 174.)

heart into the heart of another”.¹³⁵⁸ But for Fr. Kentenich this definition has got a deeper meaning in the Schönstatt Family. He says:

*“As such, “Inscriptio” is an expression which just stands for a psychological definition of love. But the love which is meant by **us** is the **Inscriptio perfecta, perpetua, mutua**—the perfect, permanent, and mutual inscription of hearts. It is therefore not just any degree of love - (...) it means for us the highest degree of love.”*¹³⁵⁹

It is “a fusion of hearts” which “reaches into the subconscious life of the soul.”¹³⁶⁰ The purpose of this ascetical practice is to purify the subconscious life of the soul. This is because at the subconscious level “our human nature has a certain negative predisposition to cross and suffering as a result of original sin.”¹³⁶¹ Therefore through this ascetical practice one makes “a decided effort to change ... (the) nature’s negative predisposition to cross and suffering into a positive one”¹³⁶² by learning to accept the cross and suffering. This is known as “preferential option in one’s attitude [for cross and suffering].”¹³⁶³ It is a love for the cross with a condition. Summing up all these thoughts together we can say:

*“The unique feature of the Inscriptio is the explicit confrontation with our native resistance to cross and suffering. Because we are so predisposed to reject crosses (a natural defense, but disordered by original sin), and because God so often needs us to accept crosses and suffering to reach the heights of sanctity, the Inscriptio is about overcoming a basic obstacle to sanctity: that we “accept God’s will,” but only when it pleases us or only until it gets difficult.”*¹³⁶⁴

Applying this definition to the Covenant of Love, Fr. Kentenich defines this dedication as: “the preferential option for cross and suffering, building on the firm trust that God and Our Lady would then take the reigns of the entire family into their hands.”¹³⁶⁵ One should always remember that the cross and suffering are accepted as God’s gifts only to the extent that it pleases God and not for its own sake.

¹³⁵⁸ Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality, Pp. 125-126.

¹³⁵⁹ Ibid., P. 126.

¹³⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹³⁶¹ Ibid.

¹³⁶² Ibid.

¹³⁶³ Ibid.

¹³⁶⁴ Niehaus, Jonathan, 200 Questions about Schönstatt, op. cit., P. 54.

¹³⁶⁵ Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality, P. 128.

Otherwise this devotional practice would turn out to be pathological.¹³⁶⁶ Therefore we can say:

“In the Inscriptio, one inscribes one’s heart in the heart of the Blessed Mother, especially under the aspect of overcoming the fear of the cross by freely asking God to send whatever crosses he holds in store for us.”¹³⁶⁷

Fr. Kentenich considers the Inscriptio dedication not only as a devotional practice but also as a psychological means to heal the deep wounds of our soul, which lie at the conscious, unconscious and sub-conscious levels of our soul.¹³⁶⁸

The Joseph Engling Consecration is a kind of specific consecration, where one expresses the readiness to offer one’s life for the work of Mother Thrice Admirable in Schönstatt, provided that it is the will of God. This consecration is related to the life of Joseph Engling (1898-1918), who was an outstanding member of the founding generation of Schönstatt. In the year 1918, he wrote a prayer, expressing his willingness to sacrifice his life for the aims of the Sodality.¹³⁶⁹ His consecration prayer which he wrote on June 3, 1918 is found in the Second Founding Document as follows:

“Dear Mother, Mother Thrice Admirable, I give myself to you again as your sacrifice. I offer you everything I am and have, my body and my soul with all its capabilities, everything I own, my freedom and my will. I want to belong entirely to you. I am yours. Use me and whatever is mine entirely as pleases you. But if it can be reconciled with your plans, let me be a sacrifice for the aims

¹³⁶⁶ Cf., Ibid., P. 127.

¹³⁶⁷ Footnote, No. 19, in: Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 131.

¹³⁶⁸ Cf., Frömbgen, Erika M., “Tiefenpsychologie”, in: Brantzen, Hubertus (Hrsg), *Schönstatt-Lexikon: Fakten-Ideen-Leben*, Patris Verlag, 1996, Pp. 395-396. The author describes this thought as follows: „P. Kentenich gehört zu den Pionieren, die als Priester, Seelsorger und Lehrer zeitgleich mit der aufkommenden Tiefenpsychologie die latent verborgene „Tiefenseele“ mit ihren un- und unterbewußten Vorgängen und Möglichkeiten ernstgenommen und berücksichtigt haben. Nach seiner Erfahrung und wiederholten Aussage wird ein Großteil menschlichen Handelns weit mehr von un- und unterbewußten Voreinstellungen denn von bewußten Vorentscheidungen bestimmt. So verwendet er schon früh die Ausdrücke „bewußtes, unbewußtes und unterbewußtes Seelenleben“. Dem Unterbewußten ordnet er alle jene seelischen Dispositionen zu, welche die bewußten maßgebend beeinflussen, ohne direkt erkennbar zu sein (positive und/oder negative Motive, Voreinstellungen, Erlebnisse, Erfahrungen). Tiefenpsychologische Erkenntnis zielt daher seinerseits zeitlebens auf tiefenpsychologische Selbsterkenntnis, auch „Läuterung und Reinigung des un- und unterbewußten Seelenlebens“, „Herzensreinigung“ oder „Infinitismus der Tiefe“ genannt, die in der „affektiven Reife“ angestrebt wird.“

¹³⁶⁹ Schoenstatt’s Covenant Spirituality, P. 20.

which you have assigned to our (family). In humility, your unworthy servant, Joseph Engling” (June 3, 1918). ”¹³⁷⁰

Joseph Engling died on the battlefield on October 4, 1918. It is the firm belief of the Schönstatt Family that his life was accepted by God in the spirit of his life-offering. It was also a sign for the Schönstatt Family that Mary takes our consecration seriously, even to the final offering of our lives. This is the ultimate depth of the Covenant of Love.¹³⁷¹

VI.5.3.7.2. Universalism in the height

This could be expressed in the words of the Third Founding Document as: *“Five hearts and one beat”*.¹³⁷² It means that through the fusion of our hearts with the heart of Mary by virtue of the Covenant of Love, *“the Blessed Mother has led the Schönstatt Family to enter into a corresponding bridal covenant of love with our Lord, into a covenant of love with the Father and with the Holy Spirit”*.¹³⁷³ This is possible because of the nature of the Covenant of Love, namely: self-giving, devotion and transmission. Fr. Kentenich in his talk during 1947 explains it as follows:

“Wir wissen, das Liebesbündnis kennt nicht nur Hingabe und Preisgabe, sondern auch Weitergabe. Das will bedeuten: Es wird die Liebe, die wir persönlich der Gottesmutter schenken, von ihr weitergeleitet zum Heiland, weiter zum dreifaltigen Gott.”¹³⁷⁴

Concerning the important happenings in the history of the Schönstatt Family in the year 1942 (20 Jan) and in the following years 1943 and 1944, Fr. Kentenich says that Mary has led the Schönstatt Family to enter into a covenant with the Blessed Trinity. He explains this in his talk to the candidates in the tertianship of the Pallottine Fathers in the year 1952 as follows:

“...(Universalismus oder Infinitismus der Höhe). Das Liebesbündnis wird nicht nur mit der Gottesmutter geschlossen, sondern mit der ganzen Dreifaltigkeit. Wenn wir in dem

¹³⁷⁰ Consecration of May 31, 1918 on the shore of the Lys River near Calonne, France on the front lines of World War I; as written by Joseph Engling on June 3, 1918, as cited in: *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 48, ; *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 35.

¹³⁷¹ Cf., Id., P. 21.

¹³⁷² *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 103, ; *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 78.

¹³⁷³ Kentenich, Pater Josef, *Krönung Mariens*, op. cit., P. 64. The original text is: „Sie hat die Familie hineingeführt in das entsprechende bräutliche Liebesbündnis mit dem Heiland, (das Liebesbündnis mit) dem Vater und dem Heiligengeist.“

¹³⁷⁴ Kentenich, Pater Joseph, *Strategie des Liebesbündnisses*, op. cit., P. 150.

Zusammenhang vom 20.I.1942 sprechen, dann nehmen wir diesen Tag als den Zentralpunkt, als den Mittelpunkt. Um diesen Tag winden sich alle die anderen Tage: 1943, 1944 bis zum 18.X.1944. In diesen Jahren hat die Gottesmutter ihre Aufgabe darin erblickt, dafür zu sorgen, daß unser Liebesbündnis mit ihr zu einem Liebesbündnis mit dem Heiland, zu einem Liebesbündnis mit dem Himmelsvater, zu einem Liebesbündnis mit dem Heiligen Geist sich ausreifte: es ist zum Liebesbündnis mit dem dreifaltigen Gott geworden. Deswegen: Unsere originelle Frömmigkeit (ist) nicht nur ausgeprägt marianisch, sondern auch christomystisch, patrozentrisch und trinitarisch. Damit haben Sie an sich den ganzen Universalismus der Frömmigkeit Pallottis, der in der Familie Wirklichkeit geworden ist.”¹³⁷⁵

Whatever we have reflected in detail under the title: “*Trinitarian aspect of the Covenant of Love*” in this chapter would be fittingly applicable to prove the “*universalism in the height*” of the Covenant of Love. But before we proceed to the next dimension it is necessary to point out that *universalism in the height* also refers to our participation in the entire work of redemption, just like Mary. Fr. Kentenich explains this as follows:

“Natürlich müssen Sie das ganze Liebesbündnis auf sich wirken lassen in seiner Universalität, d.h. nicht nur in seiner mystischen Hingabe. Die Gottesmutter gern haben und umgekehrt von ihr geliebt werden, das ist nicht allein der Ton. Dahinter steckt die welterobernde Tendenz: Wir wollen ihr mithelfen, ihre Lebensaufgabe zu lösen, das will heißen, die Lebensaufgabe der Dauerhelferin beim gesamten Erlösungswerke.”¹³⁷⁶

Fr. Kentenich makes a clear reference to this in the Third Founding Document. He says:

“The other instrument group is striving for the full realization of the mystery of redemption, and is therefore especially devoted with all their love to Our Lord as the great Redeemer of the world and the Blessed Mother as his permanent helpmate in the entire work of redemption. Such a devotion also encompasses the Blessed Trinity, at least implicitly.”¹³⁷⁷

¹³⁷⁵ *Brasilienterziat*, Band III, P. 155. 20th Jan 1942 marked his decision to go to the concentration camp for the sake of the Schönstatt family and for the Movement. (Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., P. 160.). 25th Mar 1943 marked his decision to devote completely for the service of the Movement and to find ways to guide the movements outside the camp. The year 1943 had a number of happenings too. 18th Oct 1944 was the 30th anniversary of 18th Oct 1914. In all these multiple decisions and happenings, Fr. Kentenich realized that the Blessed Mother led the entire Schönstatt Family to the Covenant of Love with the Triune God. (Cf., Monnerjahn, Engelbert, *Joseph Kentenich*, op. cit., Pp. 169-179.)

¹³⁷⁶ *Id.*, P. 147.

¹³⁷⁷ *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 102, ; *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 78.

In short we can say that *universalism in the height* is also characterized in the fact that the Covenant of Love helps us to strive for the realization of the mystery of redemption and helps us to be imbued in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. It enables us to become in the words of Fr. Kentenich: “*Instrument of the Father through Christ with the Mother Thrice Admirable in the Holy Spirit.*”¹³⁷⁸ This explains the truth: “*Five hearts and one beat*”.

VI.5.3.7.3. *Universalism in the breadth*

The *universalism in the breadth* is a “*covenant with human beings*”. The *transmission* character of the Covenant of Love not only takes us into the heights of the supernatural world but also leads us to enter into a covenant with the Church, world, nations, dear and near ones, social groups and the society.¹³⁷⁹ The following statements of Fr. Kentenich explain about the dimension of breadth in the Covenant of Love.

“*Liebesweitergabe, von hier aus Weitergabe auch nach unten; so bekommen wir feste Bindungen rechts und links. Ich darf mich binden, ich darf mich kindlich binden, mütterlich, väterlich binden, freundschaftlich binden. (...) Ich darf an Personen mich binden....*”¹³⁸⁰

“*Unsere Familie im Lichte des Liebesbündnisses; vollkommenes Liebesbündnis mit der lieben Gottesmutter und dem dreifaltigen Gott, auch vollkommenes Liebesbündnis miteinander, ineinander und füreinander.*”¹³⁸¹

In the history of the Schönstatt Family the development of the Covenant of Love in its breadth could be realized in the founding of International Schönstatt Movement through the Third Founding Document. Through this important happening one could understand that the Covenant of Love of October 18, 1914 has stretched out its branches into the world and society.¹³⁸² The following explanation of Fr. Kentenich would help us to grasp the dimension of the breadth. He states:

“*Universalismus der Breite nach: Damals ist die Internationale gegründet worden durch die Dritte Gründungsurkunde. Ein Großteil der ganzen Welt war ja in Dachau vertreten. Eine Anzahl*

¹³⁷⁸ Schoenstatt: *The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 103, ; Schönstatt: *Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 78.

¹³⁷⁹ Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 52.

¹³⁸⁰ Kentenich, Pater Joseph, *Strategie des Liebesbündnisses*, op. cit., P. 151.

¹³⁸¹ Ibid., P. 160.

¹³⁸² Cf., Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 52.

von Völkern hatte nun ihre Vertreter zu diesem Akte geschickt. Das war also schon ein Stück Internationale, nicht nur der Vorsatz, eine Internationale werden zu lassen. Die Vertreter der verschiedenen Nationen, die damals mitgemacht haben, haben auch ein Liebesbündnis untereinander und mit Schönstatt geschlossen.”¹³⁸³

According to Fr. Kentenich, if the Covenant of Love should reach its breadth then it is not enough to be just instruments in the hands of Mary and the Triune God. We need to possess a heart like Mary, like Christ and like God. This would help us to overcome our self-seeking obsession, to break all the narrow structure in order to build a community of life with a new social order. By virtue of Covenant of Love we need to enter into a relationship with all people and nations without any discrimination by embracing everything equally in love. By doing it we can fill the world with the love of Christ and Mary and unite the entire world with the Father. The Covenant of love leads us to become an outstanding apostle for the whole world.¹³⁸⁴

VI.5.3.7.4. *Universalism in the length*

The infinitism of length says: “*We believe that Schönstatt has a lasting duration in the Church*”.¹³⁸⁵ This points out to the unique fact that our Covenant of love is not limited to our lives here and now but it is for our entire lives, here on earth and in heaven. It means that it is our belief that by virtue of our Covenant of Love,

*“whatever we have encompassed and loved and strived for here on earth with all our love, may and must and will become, to the extent that this is possible, the object of our concern through all eternity.”*¹³⁸⁶

But above all it is our strong belief that by virtue of the Covenant of Love,

*“all the faithfully departed from our family are not dead nor are unfruitful for us and our common life’s work ... they are extremely effectively active for the realization of our mission from heaven.”*¹³⁸⁷

¹³⁸³ *Brasilienterziat*, Band III, P. 156.

¹³⁸⁴ Cf., *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, op. cit., Pp. 104-105, ; Cf., *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., Pp. 79-80.

¹³⁸⁵ *Brasilienterziat*, Band III, P. 156.

¹³⁸⁶ *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 105, ; *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., Pp. 80-81.

¹³⁸⁷ *Schoenstatt: The Founding Documents*, op. cit., P. 105, ; *Schönstatt: Die Gründungsurkunden*, op. cit., P. 81.

Thus we can conclude that the *dimension of length* consists in the truth that the First Founding Document has its effect connecting the earthly and heavenly reality. It manifests “*our solidarity with those before us and those after us, with those who have died and those who are yet to come, and those with whom we shall spend eternity.*”¹³⁸⁸

From the above reflections we can clearly understand that the universal character of the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt is not a spiritual theory, which was developed by Fr. Kentenich with his wide spread knowledge and intelligence, nor is it an exaggeration without having any roots in the realities of the world. The uniqueness of this universal character of the Covenant of Love has its roots in the historical growth and development of the Schönstatt Family. This will remain as the hallmark of Schönstatt always because it is a living reality which influences and renews life in all dimensions.

VI.6. Conclusion

Schönstatt is a *religious* and *renewal* Movement which is strongly *Marian* in character. It has a three-fold spirituality known as: “*everyday sanctity*”, “*instrument spirituality*” and “*covenant spirituality*”. The *covenant spirituality* plays a very vital role in Schönstatt and it is fundamentally based on the Marian consecration in Schönstatt, which is known as the ***Covenant of Love***. The Spirituality of Covenant of Love is the *spiritual compass* of Schönstatt. If one wants to understand Schönstatt, then he has to orient himself with the help of this *spiritual compass*. Our exploration on the “*mystery of Covenant of Love*” throughout this chapter helped us to understand that this mystery does not deal just simply with consecration to Mary but it deals with a unique, vibrant, and dynamic life process between the divine and the human, which is *covenant-centric*. It is an interplay between the human and divine realities, which comes into existence through the Marian consecration and which manifests a dynamic, covenantal relationship between these two realities. And hence we can say that Schönstatt has a *covenant-centric* Marian devotion, which is patterned on the reality of God’s covenant with human beings in the history of our salvation.

¹³⁸⁸ Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., Pp. 52-53.

Journeying through the highways of the covenant spirituality, one cannot overlook the important role played by Fr. Kentenich, whom God and Mary used as their instrument in building up of the Schönstatt Movement. He was God's chosen instrument, who could be best described as the one who had "*his hands on the pulse of the time and his ear on the heart of God*".¹³⁸⁹ It was his firm belief in the vitality and power of the Marian consecration and in the guidance of the Divine Providence, which steered the growth and development of the Schönstatt Movement and its Marian spirituality to its paramount heights. His life took a marked turn at the age of nine, when his mother consecrated him to Mary, entrusting him to her motherly, educative care. Since then, Mary became a vibrant part of his life who indeed played an effective role in and through his life to lead people to God. God always used His simple instruments to bring His message to the people. In Schönstatt God revealed His plan to Fr. Kentenich at different turns of his life and He proclaimed God's message at all phases of his life. Whatever came into existence and got established in Schönstatt cannot be understood without the person of Fr. Kentenich. Symbolically speaking we can say that since 1914, whatever happened in Schönstatt could be seen as a weaving between the God of life and him. God weaved the pattern that He had planned through his life using the thread, called Mary. Fr. Kentenich loved and accepted all that God had desired of him. He brought his soul-field to God again and again and God ploughed it through the instrument called Mary in order to bring an excellent yield in and through Schönstatt.

Fr. Kentenich marks the date October 18, 1914, the day of the Covenant of Love with *Mother Thrice Admirable* as God's entry into the history of Schönstatt. According to him it is a consecration to Mary, where one gives oneself totally to her, with all that one has and one is. Therefore it is a perfect gift of self to Mary. This unique consecration is connected with her mission in the salvation history from the Schönstatt Shrine. By consecrating oneself to Mary one entrusts oneself to her motherly and educative task, through which she forms and shapes the consecrated persons into her image and into the image and likeness of her Son, Christ. Through this consecration Mary leads us to the Triune God. It enables us to have a covenantal relationship with the Triune God, which is a great enrichment for our lives. For this reason Fr. Kentenich considers that the Covenant of Love is pedagogical in character. This would mean that the mutual relationship in the Covenant of Love:

¹³⁸⁹ Kentenich, Josef, *Brief an P. Menningen*, 1955, 14. März, (unpublished), Manuskript, P. 62.

*“Can strengthen the dignity of the person as both one who gives and receives love, awakening all the abilities of the soul to love God, fellow-man and self. (...) It tries to lead the person from basic experiences of attachment to the experience of concrete, personal commitments – **to the experience of covenant**. The basis of this pedagogy is the **covenant of love with the MTA**.”*¹³⁹⁰

Indeed he was the messenger chosen by God to proclaim the *Good News of God’s covenantal relationship through Marian consecration*. Hence I would portray him as the “*Covenant Messenger*”, who unveiled the *mystery of Covenant of Love* by unfolding uniqueness and the originality of the Covenant of Love. Thus from the content of this chapter we can conclude that the Covenant of Love in Schönstatt is very original in the tradition of the Church and it is integrated with all the aspects of Christian life. The history of Schönstatt points out to the undeniable fact that the originality of the Covenant of Love grew from a simple “*favourite, secret, daring idea*” of Fr. Kentenich into its *depth, height, breadth and length* slowly and organically over the years.

¹³⁹⁰ Niehaus, Jonathan, *200 Questions about Schönstatt*, op. cit., P. 84.

VII. General Conclusion

In a world, where secularization, desacralization, materialism and atheism are on the constant increase, one thing remains unchanged until today, even in the modern scientific and digital era, namely, the ardent quest for Holiness. In spite of all the rocketing advancements and developments in the field of Science and Technology, human beings have never failed to search for the Creator in order to belong to His eternal love. This has been one of the distinguishing characteristic features of the human race throughout all eras. In the course of time God communicated his divine love through His Son, Jesus Christ. He entrusted this gift of love to the human race through the person of Mary. Just as God entrusted His Son to Mary to take His human form into this world, He also entrusted us to Mary at the Foot of the Cross through His Son (Jn 19: 25-27), so that she could lead us to the divine love. This privilege of Mary, to lead the human race to the divine love, comes through her union with her divine Son, Jesus Christ, in every work of love. Through her communion with her Son and through her co-operation with Him from Annunciation to Assumption, Mary plays a vital role in uniting us to the divine love. Having understood the fact that God has entrusted us to the maternal care of Mary, the faithful began to confide to her care everything that belonged to them. They believed in her powerful intercession and began to abandon themselves to Mary through various forms of popular pieties. One such form of total abandonment to Mary was through the form of an Act of Consecration to her and to her Immaculate Heart.

One of the religious movements, which emerged during the Twentieth Century, known as *International Apostolic Schönstatt Movement*, a *religious* and *renewal* Movement which is strongly *Marian* in character, practiced the Marian consecration in the form of spirituality of Covenant of Love, which is decidedly marked by a practical and active co-operation of the covenant partners: “Mary and us”. The spirituality of the Covenant, which runs throughout the Bible, has been merged into the practice of Marian consecration in Schönstatt Movement. Therefore the Marian consecration in Schönstatt, namely, the Covenant of Love is marked by the “mutual” character which is different from the “unilateral” character of the Marian consecration in the Church’s traditional practice. The active role of the Mary plays a central part in the Covenant of Love. Through that Covenant in which the mutual

responsibilities of the covenant partners are very important, Mary is petitioned to work especially in Schönstatt as mother and educator of Christians, so that she leads them to a profound and vital love for God and human beings. This development from the ‘*unilateral*’ to the ‘*mutual*’ character of Marian consecration in the spirituality of Schönstatt is something very unique in the life of the Church. But unfortunately this unique spirituality is not well known and well spread in the Church, outside the Schönstatt Family. Therefore in this scientific work I aimed to portray in detail the uniqueness of the structural foundations of the Covenant of Love, which is mutual in character, by analyzing it historically, dogmatically and doctrinally in five chapters.

The unique form of consecration to Mary in a mutual form cannot be understood if one does not understand the ardent quest for holiness of human beings, which in its highest form manifests itself by consecrating oneself to God. And hence in the first Chapter, I explored fundamentally the notion of “Consecration” in all the World Religions. The Practice of *Do ut des*, or ‘I give so you may give’, constitutes the principle of reciprocal relation between God and human beings in all World Religions. Though devotion with the underlying principle *do ut des* remains as a hallmark in the history of all religions at all periods, true devotion calls the devotee to serve God in righteousness and true holiness all the days of his/her life by means of self-sanctification. This invites the devotee to offer oneself as a gift to God by a particular Act of Consecration. It is a dedication of ‘self’ as a gift to the love and service of God. This act of dedication is not based on reciprocity rather it aims at loving God more and doing His will more efficaciously. It is an offering of oneself to God for a higher purpose. This devotion of consecrating oneself transcends the principle of *do ut des*. Therefore it was very necessary to describe at the very outset of my treatise the basic notion of consecration in various perspectives in order to explore the role and significance of this fundamental concept in all World Religions. The Christian religion speaks about the consecration to the heavenly human beings, where Mary is brought into the realm of consecration. One of the divine truths hailed by the Christian religion is that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the first and the most consecrated woman of human race and she remains as the prototype of all consecrations. This serves as a basis for the consecration to Mary. The devotion of consecration to Mary had and still has got a great impact on the life of the faithful.

It is the firm belief of the Church, right from the time of first Christians, that

by entrusting oneself to Mary through an Act of Consecration, Mary would lead us more deeply into a loving relationship with her Son. And hence in my second Chapter, I surveyed in detail the historical development of the devotion of consecration to Mary in the setting of the history of the Marian devotion in the life of the Church. By going through the various stages of the historical development of this devotion, one can understand that both in the East and in the West a significant attention has been given to Mary in the religious practices of Christianity. One cannot over look the fact that right from the birth of the Church the simple faithful honoured and praised Mary by trying to give her an all-prevading place in their lives as manifestation of their love for Mary. But the supreme act of love, which has been shown to the Mother of God through all generations, is through Marian consecration. This devotion has been fostered through the writings and teachings of the Fathers, Doctors, and Popes of the Church and also through the Founders of various religious congregations. Various apparitions of Mary during Nineteenth Century contributed to the development of the devotion and practice of Marian consecration to a great extent but it reached its paramount heights after the apparition at Fatima in the Twentieth Century. The very fact that both the arduous human efforts and the divine interventions worked together in the development of this devotion indicates that the development was not a smooth one without rough storms in the life of the Church.

The history of Marian consecration points out that though it has its unique significance, still it has been an object of criticisms and objections. There were many theological errors, mistakes, problems, defects and confusions, which took away the credit of Marian consecration, which in turn desperately called for clarifications and explanations. One of the sign of contradictions was regarding the term ‘consecration’ in Marian consecration. Many questions were raised like when we speak of “Marian consecration”, do we mean “entrustment” alone or do we go beyond this meaning? Consecration pertains to God alone and depends on his sovereign initiative and our part can only be a life of response. One cannot be consecrated to anyone but God. If it is true then how can we speak of consecration to Mary, because Mary is just a mere creature? Therefore in the third Chapter, I dealt first at length with the significance of Marian consecration. Then I tried to examine the various problems and objections by providing sufficient explanations, which help us to understand the devotion of Marian consecration in a right manner. The explanations were also substantiated with the basic teachings of the Magisterium. But everything was not

over with that. We have seen that the theme of “consecration to Mary” was a big problematic theme because Mary was seen as a mere *creature*. Now the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary raised a further problem by posing the questions: How can one consecrate oneself to an internal organ of a mere creature? Heart is simply an organ, or flesh or just a muscle. Is it legitimate to consecrate oneself to the Heart of Mary? Is this not idolatry? How can one understand such acts of consecrations to the Immaculate Heart theologically?

Throughout the centuries the faithful turned instinctively to Mary in times of tribulations because it has recognized the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the symbol of her extraordinary sanctity and love and the faithful understood that this Immaculate Heart of Mary loves all her children. Therefore the response of the faithful to the love her Immaculate Heart found its manifestations in the form of imitating the virtues of Mary, because there is a blending of love and sacrifice, which is the very core of the Christian life. They also observed the feast of the Immaculate Heart and began to practice the consecration of the World to her Immaculate Heart. In order to gain a clear understanding about the uniqueness and the significance of her Immaculate Heart, in the fourth Chapter, I clarified the meaning, the nature of the symbolism of heart in order to affirm the legitimacy of this devotional practice. Then I explored the history of this devotion, its origin in scripture and in tradition and its development in the veneration in the Church along with its problems and difficulties. At this stage of the treatise solid dogmatic foundations became very compulsory to plunge into the depths of this devotional practice.

But one important theme remained yet to be answered, namely the role of Mary in our consecrations and the principle behind it. Mary through her role as the Mother of God and through her participation in the redemptive work of her Son remains as a *privileged creature* by being closest to God and by sharing the intimate love of God. In the second part of this Chapter, I tried to give an explanation to the questions: How Mary, as a *privileged creature*, plays an important role in our consecrations? How the principle of her mediation plays a determining role to understand the unique role of Mary in our consecration? The explanation is given by analyzing the maternal mediation of Mary in the light of Christ’s mediation, and by drawing support from scriptures, teachings of the tradition and from the teachings of the Magisterium.

In the final Chapter, I analyzed systematically the development of Marian Consecration in the spirituality of Covenant of Love in order to highlight the uniqueness and originality of the Covenant of Love. By establishing the content of the first four Chapters as the setting for my focused research I expounded the foundation, the significance and development of the spirituality of Covenant of Love in Schönstatt along with the biographical and Mariological contributions of Fr. Kentenich. In this analysis one can very well understand that the uniqueness and originality of Covenant of Love lies in the covenantal character of consecration. To understand the covenantal character of consecration it is first and foremost necessary to understand the role of Mary in the life of Fr. Kentenich, and to grasp the fundamental Mariological principles derived from his Marian life. One of the fundamental Mariological principles of Fr. Kentenich which plays a very key role in understanding the uniqueness of the Covenant of Love is his description of the *personal character* of Mary, namely, *Mary is the official and permanent associate and helpmate of Christ in the work of redemption*. After giving an explanation on the *personal character* of Mary I explained in detail the various aspects of Covenant of Love, and how it is anchored in the mutual exchange with the Mother Thrice Admirable in the shrine along with its significance, its uniqueness and its originality. This Chapter is indeed the heart piece of my entire treatise.

This entire research work began with the search for the concrete proofs to understand: “Mary’s active role in an Act of Consecration”. It was the spirituality of the Covenant of Love which helped me to find those proofs by making me to understand the active role of Mary from the shrine on the life of the one who consecrates oneself to her, in a concrete manner. By taking a deep plunge into the depths of this spirituality I understood the originality and the uniqueness of this spirituality, which are yet to be well known in the Church. In this research work I have presented in a systematic way, the uniqueness and originality of the “*spirituality of Covenant of Love*” in the light of “Marian consecration” in the tradition of the Church. By going through the lines written in this treatise, one can, at the very first instance get the impression that there is nothing novel and original in the Schönstatt’s covenant spirituality. This could be the first impression because of the fact that Fr. Kentenich did not invent or create anything new in Schönstatt. But one should understand that the originality of the covenant spirituality lies in the very fact that he developed this spirituality using various elements of the Marian spirituality, which

were commonly found in the (Marian) tradition of the Church. He laid the foundations for the covenant spirituality using Biblical references and the teachings of the Church and hence it can be affirmed that Schönstatt's covenant spirituality is rooted in the Sacred Scripture and in the (Marian) tradition of the Church. The original elements of the covenant spirituality are also rooted in the happening of the Schönstatt Family over the years. In short I can say that *the uniqueness of this spirituality lies in its covenantal nature; in its application of the mutual character, where the active role of Mary is portrayed in her educational task rooted in her Divine Motherhood*. This mutual gift of self by the Covenantal partners in the Act of Consecration is an exclusive element found in the spirituality of Covenant of Love in Schönstatt alone.

The spirituality of the Covenant of Love does not deal just simply with consecration to Mary but it deals with a unique, vibrant, and dynamic life process between the divine and the human, which is *covenant-centric*, which is patterned on the reality of God's covenant with the humankind in the history of our salvation and that is the reason why it is termed as "Covenant of Love". The terminology "Covenant of Love" must be seen as a formulation, which avoids all the controversies connected with the terminology: "Marian consecration". The Covenant of Love is *"the classical answer to the testament of our dying Lord, "Ecce Mater tua! Ecce filius tuus!"*¹³⁹¹ It is the consecration which is made *"in a conscious, voluntary, and unconditional manner, and is made the personal and permanent form of living and acting for time and eternity."*¹³⁹² Its universal character helps us to enter into a covenantal relationship with God, with creatures and with the entire world. It unites us both with the living and with the departed ones. Such a Marian consecration is indeed an original consecration in the tradition of the Church.

Mary's role in the work of salvation is described as: the *official and permanent associate and helpmate of Christ in His entire work of salvation*. This is the personal character, privilege and role of Mary in the work of salvation, in which the Covenant of Love is rooted. Mary is also honoured under the title: *Mother Thrice Admirable*. This title describes the tasks of Mary, namely, Mary's task as *mother and educator*. Just like Mary was taken into the home of the disciples after Christ

¹³⁹¹ Mary, our Mother and Educator, P. 173.

¹³⁹² Ibid.

entrusted her to them (Jn 19:27), so also did the “*gentle force*” applied by the Schönstatt boys together with their spiritual father, Fr. Kentenich invited Mary to take home in the old chapel and to turn it into place of grace. But she was not willing to carry out her mission from the shrine all alone. Therefore she invited the Schönstatt boys to become her covenant partners to support her by bringing *capital of grace*. The boys were expected to bring sacrifices through their good works and to bring merits through their efforts of self-education and self-sanctification. Through this Mary turned her children into “*shareholders of grace*” to the extent that without our contributions to the *capital of grace* the religious and moral renewal would not take place from the shrine. This mutual co-operation of the earthly covenant partner with the supernatural covenant partner, Mary, is also a unique element in the tradition of the Church.

Another unique element of Covenant of Love is the shrine, where one makes the Covenant of Love and its importance. “*The covenant of love with the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schönstatt...is sealed in the place of her particular effectiveness, in **her** shrine*”.¹³⁹³ It is from her shrine that Mary distributes three-fold graces to all those who visit her in the shrine, namely, the grace of home, the grace of inner transformation and the grace of mission. The key point in the message about the shrine is that *a place will turn into a shrine only through the personal Covenant of Love with Mary*.¹³⁹⁴ It is from her shrine that Mary draws the hearts of all those who consecrate themselves to her. The shrine is her school, where the consecrated hearts are educated and transformed into her instruments. The Covenant of Love is always attached to a shrine and whenever a Covenant of Love is made anywhere in this world it is drawn into the Covenant of Love in the Original Shrine, where the first Covenant of Love was made. This attachment to the shrine makes the Covenant of Love original to Schönstatt.

The mutual character of the Covenant of Love manifests itself in the “*exchange of hearts*” and the “*fusion of hearts*”. The Covenant of Love is a perfect and mutual gift of self to Mary in love, which means there is a mutual exchange of interests, goods and hearts. This notion of *mutual absolute and perfect total self surrender to Our Lady* is the *heart piece* of the Covenant of Love because a *spiritual*

¹³⁹³ LSch 1952, I, P. 103.

¹³⁹⁴ Cf., Vautier, Paul, *Maria, die Erzieherin*, P. 223.

two-in-oneness with Mary is created through this exchange of hearts. Through this mutual exchange of hearts our sickly and unhealthy hearts are healed and our sinful hearts are transformed through her holiness, which further strengthens our relationship with God. Through the graces of transformation Mary generates divine life within our hearts, nourishes it constantly with graces and effectively educates us for our mission in the Kingdom of God. Thus our *two-in-oneness* with Mary will lead us to Christ, where a *three-in-oneness* is created because of our union with Christ. This indeed is an original element of the Covenant of Love. Pope John Paul II offered his life and heart to Mary with the words: “*Totus Tuus*” – “*Totally Yours*”, but Fr. Kentenich expresses the exchange of hearts as “*Totum pro toto*”- “*All for all*”. I would express the *exchange of hearts* between the covenant partners in the style of the testament of our dying Lord as “*Ecce cor meum*”- “*Behold my heart*”. In Covenant of Love both the covenantal partners give oneself to each other entirely. Since the heart represents the entire person, it would be apt to express the mutual gift of self as “*Ecce cor meum*”. Indeed it is a unique thing to receive Mary’s Immaculate Heart in exchange to my unhealthy impure heart. In this mutual gift of self by the covenantal partners in the Act of Consecration lies the fundamental uniqueness and originality of the spirituality of Covenant of Love.

The unique treasures of the Covenant of Love are popular only within the Schönstatt Family around the world. It is very unfortunate that though this spirituality is hundred years old, still it has not taken deep roots into the life and spirituality of the Church. It still remains as a great challenge to bring this spirituality into the life stream of the Church, which will bear rich fruits of grace wherever it flows, and which will awaken the paralyzed movements of consecration back to life.

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Lourdu Stephen XAVIER

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Ich versichere an Eides statt,
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**A HISTORIC-SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION ON THE
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